

**A
MARVEL
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STARBURST

SCIENCE FANTASY IN TELEVISION, CINEMA AND GRAPHICS

BOND IN SPACE
-MOONRAKER EFFECTS

**THE CHINA
SYNDROME**
FROM FICTION TO FACT?

SCREEN ROBOTS
PORTFOLIO

007's "JAWS"
INTERVIEW

**THE SPACEMAN
AND KING ARTHUR**



COLOUR REVIEW





Mechanical Men of the Movies Portfolio - see page 18

STARBURST

SCIENCE FANTASY IN TELEVISION, CINEMA AND GRAPHICS

Volume 1, Number 12

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Well, it's taken since December, 1977, but we've made it! The completion of Volume One of Britain's premiere science fantasy magazine.

And, you must admit, we're really starting to cover new ground. This issue we're featuring such diverse areas as *Lost World Movies*, *James Bond*, *China Syndrome* and *The Space Movie*.

But don't think we're changing direction. We also feature the Hawks' classic *Thing From Another World*, a Robots portfolio, *The Spaceman and King Arthur*, plus our ever-popular *Things to Come*, and *Bookworld*.

However, this being such a landmark issue, I'd like to take the space for a personal dedication. Not to our oft-praised contributors—without whom we'd never have got this far, but rather to the rarely praised "backroom boys" whose enthusiasm is certainly equal to that of our more well-known contributors.

To our art editors: from Nigel Money who set the standard for others to follow in issues 1, 2 and 3, through the ever-present Chas Farnsbarns, plus Stewart Orr and Paul Harwood. To our tireless associate editor Alan McKenzie (who's almost pushed me out entirely!). And to our publishers, Stan Lee and mighty Marvel Comics, whose faith has kept the dream alive.

To each and all of you, from me and, I'm sure, from every one of our readers... thanks.

Dez Skinn
Dez Skinn/Editor

The Starburst Interview: Richard Kiel 4
Since appearing as Jaws in *The Spy Who Loved Me*, Richard Kiel has found no end of science fiction and fantasy films that require his extraordinary talents. After playing the title role of *The Humanoid* (see last month's issue) he repeats his role of Jaws in the new Bond film, *Moonraker*. And yet to appear on British screens is *The Phoenix*.

The Spaceman and King Arthur 14
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Robots Portfolio 18
Weybeck in *Starburst 7* we presented an over-view of the many robots to stalk across the science fiction cinema screen since *Metropolis*. Since that article appeared we have acquired many more excellent pictures of Mechanical Men of the Movies which we would like to share with our readers.

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Last issue British special effects wizard Derek Meddings talked about the events which preceded his being signed to create the space scenes for *Moonraker*. This month he talks about the problems he encountered while working on the latest Bond film.

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One of the most influential film-makers of all time, Howard Hawks, had a brief flirtation with the science fiction film in 1951 and in the process introduced the hostile alien figure to American cinema.

The China Syndrome 44
When this film was made the concept was, in fact, science fiction. But as often happens in the hectic world of science the fact has overtaken the fiction. Either way, *The China Syndrome* is a gripping thriller with a sound base in science.

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The Starburst Interview

RICHARD KIEL

In conversation with the star of *Moonraker* and *The Humanoid*

Interview by Tony Crawley



Above: Richard Kiel, as Jaws, poses with Blanche Ravalec (who plays Dolly) on the set of the new Bond epic, *Moonraker* (1979).
Left: Jaws gets to the foot of the matter in this aerobatic sequence

Richard Kiel is a pain in the neck. Looking up at him for an hour or so plays sheer havoc with the neck muscles. He's rather tall, you see. Even when he's sitting down, he's tall. Ultra tall.

He's seated now, finishing lunch in Kensington. The wine bottles are open. He doesn't have to use his steel teeth. But seated, he's the same height as the waiters huzzing by with open mouths. Like me, they're trying not to stare. But he does take some getting used to. Richard Kiel is used to people trying to get used to Richard Kiel.

He measures in at 7ft 2ins. A ceiling brusher, if ever there was one. *Time* magazine, being forever more precise, not to say fussy, says he's 7ft 13ins. But what's a quarter-inch between friends. Or among giants. Suffice it to say, if Kiel got together with Peter (*Star Wars* Chewbacca) Mayhew, you'd hardly notice any difference in height, if indeed there is one. Then again, if he did get together with Mayhew, traffic would shudder to a halt and buildings would rattle in their wake.

Richard Kiel weighs around 315 pounds. He wears size 17 shoes and a 19-inch collar. "It gives you a forced motivation," he remarks about his enormous height. "I'm aiming for success in movies to support my life style."

If acting falls through for Kiel he has a side-line career to fall back on. Real estate. He doesn't risk becoming unemployed. His frame couldn't take it. "I tried it once," he remarks.

"It sure didn't work out. They don't pay enough for a man my size to eat, dress . . . just to live!"

He is, of course, a natural for space fantasy material. But not for him the role behind a mask—like Chewbacca, for instance. Or, indeed, *The Incredible Hulk*—although he was the first choice for the TV series. He's an actor, tried and tested, and therefore wishes to use his own face.

One of his earlier films was the well-intentioned but rather poorly finished off offering from the brothers Woolner: *The Human Duplicators*. His new entries are *The Phoenix*, made, would you believe, in Taiwan—and Italy's latest *Star Wars* rip-off, *The Humanoid*. Earlier this year we saw him off fantasy duty in *Force 10 From Navarone*, which co-starred Has Solo himself, Harrison Ford.

Before landing on his size 17 feet in acting—Richard took off in producer William (Cannon) Courant's TV series, *Klondike*—he had the usual assortment of odd jobs. He was a washing-machine repair man once, though how he fitted under the kitchen sink takes some explaining.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, on September 13, 1939, he first moved to Los Angeles with his folks aged eight. By twelve he had reached almost his present height and was, sure enough, a wiz in his school's basketball team. He paid his acting dues in the theatre, but to start with, his height was against him on the screen—the usual array of hoods, dumbbells, toughs and lumbering dementia in such TV shows as *The*

Riflemen, *Gilligan's Island*, *I Spy* and *Barbarary Coast*. "Having played ghosts, psychopathic killers, retarded customers many times, I've run into the situation where the directors think I'm really like that. And the general public, through miscasting or whatever, seems to think the big guy has got to be a dullard. A big dummy."

"Of course it upsets me. I'm blessed with a pretty good aptitude. I could read *Readers' Digest* when I was five. So I used to react when directors said they wouldn't ask me to do anything 'too difficult'. Now I see the funny side of it. I tell them: Look, I can walk and talk. If you want me to do something, just ask . . . though I realise it'll be a big surprise to you!"

Kiel prefers intelligent directors. Top of his list—the current 007 boss, Lewis Gilbert. "He can see that I'm a human being." It wasn't always that way. His first film, *Engel*, in 1961, had Kiel playing . . . a cave man.

Since when he's completed about twenty features including Otto Preminger's *Skidoo*, Robert Aldrich's *The Mean Machine* (he was a fellow convict of Burt Reynolds), and he had just completed the thriller, *The Silver Streak* with Gene Wilder when he got the call to glory—the world's favourite villain, Jaws.

Lunch over, I rode to Heathrow with Kiel for his only interview of his twelve-hour trip—with *Starburst*, what else? He talked about space and he talked about fiction. He also explained why he decided not to become *The Incredible Hulk*.

Starburst: Having lately completed two of movies—two-and-a-half, counting the high space quotient of *Moonraker*—I wonder what interest you might have in science fiction, per se.

Kiel: I love it. I have nothing against it. I'd like to do other things as well, though. Like *Force Ten From Navarone*, and more comedy. I did a family-type comedy in the States. But it's true, I've done plenty of science fiction, right back to *The Human Duplicators* in 1964. And I've written science fiction, in fact.

Such as . . .



Richard Kiel as he appears in the title role of *The Humanoid* (1979).

you'd appear to someone not going that fast, to be infinitesimal in size; yet inside the space craft, of whatever, you'd appear normal size to the people with you. So who knows? And I just took it from there. . . .

I have a feeling you've turned down some sf or fantasy work, though. The Incredible Hulk, for example. Surely you were offered that series?

Well, yes, I was under contract to do

The Hulk. But I had some other things I wanted to do. First of all, I'm a family man. Then, I'm an actor. And the movie business is a business. I've been an actor for almost 19 years. I think *The Hulk* is wonderful. My two kids love it. But it's not my thing. American television is a grind! But I was going to do it, because of the money, you know. For the family. I left by mutual agreement. Marvel Comics wanted a guy with more muscles, and I think it worked out to everyone's benefit. *You mean you didn't want to turn green every week on tv, huh?*

"I was under contract to play *The Hulk*. But I had other things I wanted to do."

"*The Phoenix* is a special *Sinbad*-type film. Fantasy for all the family."

I write short sf stories. One was called *Strange Worlds Within*, about the potential infinity within the atom. It dealt with Einstein's mathematical theories; the idea that if you go far enough in one direction, you'll end up back where you started from. Plus the fact that when I went to school, the atom was composed of three particles of matter: the electron, the proton and the neutron. Now, there's hundreds and hundreds and hundreds! And they all have elliptical orbits of the North and South Poles, even though they travel at the speed of light. That's not unlike the universe and the galaxies and our earth going 400,000,000 miles in a year. Einstein said that if you were going close to the speed of light,

I don't have any interest in playing somebody behind a mask. I like to make people cry, make people laugh, make people afraid, make people sad. Every actor has a big ego, of course, and part of the enjoyment of acting is not being Jaws, but being Richard Kiel playing Jaws. When you get into a part where you lose your identity completely, that isn't any fun. Not for me. For some people, it's fine. For the guy doing *The Hulk*, Lou Ferrigno, it's great, I'm sure. He's new. So this can only be a very gratifying experience for him.

But it's not your thing, as you say?
No, it's not for me. I've worked in legitimate theatre, live television, radio. I've written and directed, taken voice lessons,

dramatic lessons, all kinds of things. None of which come into working in a role like *The Hulk* . . . and particularly not on television. In American television, you're looking at a 16-17 hour day. I know, I've done it. Now, I'm in a position where I'm getting films where we work a normal work-day, then we go home and I can be with my family. They also take time in films, to do things properly. As long as those kind of parts keep coming in, why do the other thing?

Were you offered the films of Conan or Thor?

I have a very close rapport with my agent. He's been with me since the beginning. He knows what I want to do. He doesn't even tell me about any offers for things I wouldn't want to do. He knows that, for me, the play's the thing. Naturally, if I wasn't doing anything, he might start looking at such offers differently. As of now, we're looking for more sensitive roles, with all the facets of the emotions. A *Cuckoo's Nest*, say. We're in a great time for actors like me. You don't have to look like Robert Redford anymore, or Dustin Hoffman, Alan Arkin and the guy that did *Taxi Driver*, De Niro. Films now can have different types of people in them. Sometimes it makes them more interesting.

"The Humanoid is a very charming, good story that nobody can mess up."

Is that why you're in The Phoenix—made in Taiwan, of all places.

I guess they wanted to capitalise on the Bond . . . They certainly wanted me to make it very, very badly.

I can see the Bond connection: you play Steel Hands, right?

But when I got down there they wanted me to wear steel teeth . . . ! I just told them: "Wait a minute, guys, I can't do that, you know." We shot it in Taiwan. With wooden cameras. I'm not kidding. . . . A big part and a lot of work. They got 14 months work out of me in two weeks. Really incredible. I had to work hardest on staying alive—stopping them doing all the stunts with real swords. *What's the film about?*

Ah! I play the protagonist. Can you imagine a 7ft 2ins houseboy with a sword and a top-knot taken on my head? And I think he's taken over by women's libbers . . . or something. I really don't know. They didn't have a script in English. All I can say is that it helped me buy my house.

How do you cope without an English script? I managed. My feeling was that most Oriental films don't make the American market, unless they're quite good. My agent and I rationalised that if this turned out bad, well, it would never show up. *It couldn't harm you, then?*



I'm not knocking it. I'm sure it will be a very interesting film. It's not that I'm not proud of it or anything. It was interesting to work on, and I feel it's a special Sinbad-type film. Fantasy for all the family. Probably it will run in the summertime in America as a children's programme—with a Disney or a Spiderman movie.

Italy's The Humanoid, therefore, must rate as a much better production?

Oh yeah . . . *The Humanoid* is a \$5-million film. It's very charming, a good story that nobody can mess up. It's such a strong story: a robodog and a little boy. . . . The Wizard of Oz in outer space. Kind of what *Star Wars* might have been. *"Might have been?" I thought that was Oz, exactly.*

I'm not really comparing the two films. I'm just saying *The Humanoid* may be a stronger storyline than *Star Wars*.

Every new sf film claims that.

The Humanoid's strength is not based on special effects alone. The effects are there. They're done by some of the people who did *Superman* and *Star Wars*. They spent a lot of money on them, but they're not

relying on the effects. Here's where you have a good story, surrounded by special effects, rather than the effects being the entire film.

Your title role of Golob, sounds at first, more deadly than Jaws. But you're not a robovillain, all steel from head to toe,

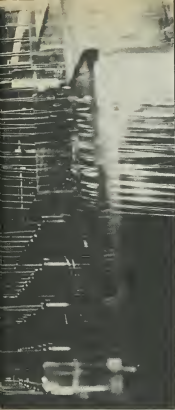
"The general public has come to think that the big guy has to be a dummy!"

I understand. You start off as a reasonably average chap and you're zapped into being this humanoid creature.

Yeah, he's victimised. I'm a protagonist again. . . .

With your build, what else?

Golob is a space sailor, just doing his job up there in outer space, with a robodog to keep him company. He has this big brother image: not the 1984 image, more like any kid's big brother. When he's changed, his world isn't totally taken from him. The leaders of his world remove



Left: Golob (Richard Kiel) matches his strength against a futuristic Iron Maiden to save the life of Barbara (Corinne Clery) in the Italian Space Opera *The Humanoid* (1979). Below: Kiel poses for a *Jaws* publicity picture.



the sensors implanted in his wrist by the villain—the control—and then Golob is on their side and ends up being a major factor in overthrowing the evil forces.

He even sacrifices himself in the end, to save them, doesn't he?

Not now. We changed that. It ends now with a full sunset shot, walking off to the sequel bit. It's another family film, really. It has fantasy and everything, and there's a kind of subtle romance between Corinne Clery and myself. At the end, I think you'll feel that maybe Golob isn't going to be so much of a loner. He's found friends. It's a very good part for me.

*And for another alumnus from both *The Spy Who Loved Me* and *Force Ten From Navarone*. . . .*

Yeah, Barbara Bach plays the evil one, Lady Agatha. She chose the more dramatic of the two female roles. It required more acting than just being another beautiful heroine again.

Who took over Donold Pleasance's role of the inevitable power-crazed villain?

Arthur Kennedy. He's very good.

You sound high on the film. Yet Italian

movies, and particularly those of an sf name—*Starcrash*, for instance—can be as hell of a mess during shooting.

Absolutely! The big difference here was not my control, nor Arthur Kennedy's, nor anyone's in the cast. It was the Titanus company's interest in getting into the English-speaking market. It's difficult to make a film just for Italy these days and still make any return (or break even) on the original investment. So this film was pre-sold to a major television network in America, it was pre-sold to Columbia for European release and to American-International in the States. And that meant a lot of conditions. It was not to be a typically spaghetti *Star Wars*. It had to have a quality that the American and English audiences expect.

And has it?

I've seen some of the film and, again, it's not an effects movie. The effects are just there. This is a story. It's about people. And it happens to take place in the future. So it needs special effects to achieve that look, and it looks pretty good. We had some difficulties. For instance, we tried to shoot it with direct sound, which is a departure for the Italians, who post-synch all the dialogue in their films, as you probably know. Very difficult to shoot direct sound. You tell an Italian that he can't make a noise on the set and he doesn't understand.

You mention your control before... Can you explain that?

My conditions were having total script approval. But I'm not an unreasonable person, so I didn't have any problems in that area. The director, George B. Lewis (his real name, by the way, is Aldo Lado) is keen on becoming a world-wide director, not just another Italian film-maker. When I gave him a four-page synopsis of my feelings towards my character of Golob, he jumped up and down with joy. There were a lot of ideas he hadn't considered, some of these sparked him off to other ideas—and they fitted in with what I had in mind. We got on fine. He was just delighted that, you know, I cared.

Apart from the Bonds, do you have a particular favourite among your films?

The *Human Duplicators* was a good role. It could—should!—have been much

better movie. But I don't think the people set out to make a *Day The Earth Stood Still*. They set out to make money.

Who are "they"?

The Woolner brothers, Murray and David Woolner. They didn't take the care it needed. There was a lot of miscasting and things like that.

A British critic said it had all the panache of Roger Corman re-making *Metropolis*, minus cohesion and coherence. Your character, Kolos, dropping in from an alien galaxy, started clouting everyone in sight. I seem to remember: George Nader and company.

Hmm. I preferred the other side of the visitor. That gave me an opportunity to be sensitive. I had a relationship with the blind girl in it, Dolores Faith.

"I write short sf stories. One was called *Strange Worlds Within*, about the potential infinity within the atom."

Restoring her sight before departing, defeated and obviously returning home to destruction as a failure.

I liked the role. But like I say, the film should have been better. It was good practise for me, put it that way.

So was *The Spy Who Loved Me*, a full thirteen years later. All your new films are a direct result of your immense triumph as *Jaws*. How did you net that part?

Because of a television series in America, which came about because of a film I did with Burt Reynolds: *The Mean Machine* (US title *The Longest Yard*). They were the small steps that led to *Jaws*. *Barbary Coast* was just another unsuccessful tv series sold to Britain... We made only thirteen weeks of it. Westerns just weren't in and we had a lot of competition on the other networks. You know, over there you can have 11,000,000 people watching and it's not enough—18,000,000 is the bottom line! It's all numbers. Even the actors have ratings.

You're joking?

No. You're called TVQ—television quotient. Alan Alda, of *MASH*, has been leading the list of 365 names for years!

They put your name into a computer to decide if they'll cast you. It's all based on your commercial appeal. And I couldn't even get an interview for *Barbary Coast*. Who knows why? Some political or financial thing with the casting people, or my TVQ didn't measure up, I don't know. I eventually sent a registered letter to the producer asking to be seen, feeling I was right for the show. His secretary had seen *The Mean Machine* and I think she persuaded him to see me. So I did the series, all thirteen weeks. BBC, I think, bought it here and Lewis Gilbert's continuity script supervisor saw it, mentioned me to him, suggesting that he and Cubby Broccoli should see me for *Jaws*. That's how I got it.

Did you see right off what the role might do for you?

I was a little frightened of it to start with. It has all the ingredients for a cartoon character. It could have been just a little too much... I met with Cubby, we had lunch, and I told him I'd like to bring more of Richard Kiel into the part. Rather than play a stone-faced killer, I wanted some humour, humanism, perseverance, to give *Jaws* a child-like quality, that made him forgivable no matter what he did. The kind of things that Boris Karloff brought to the original *Frankenstein* monster.

It sure worked. Though my little daughter will never forgive you for scaring her!

I've seen that Bond film in about thirty countries. I've yet to see the audience not applaud and cheer *Jaws*. They shot two endings, you know. They didn't know what to do with him. It was Lewis Gilbert who had his hand on it more than I did. I tried to do something different, but I never realised how important it was to do a Bond film.

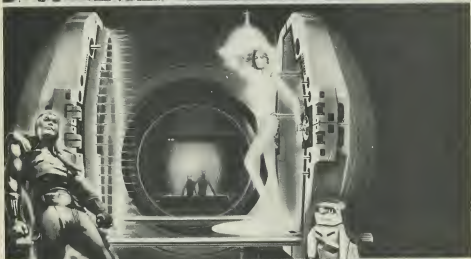
Well, until you came along it was more usually the girls who made good out of an 007 caper. Now you're back again in *Moonraker*—and on Bond's side this time? That's right. I have a girlfriend as well. But I'd rather not talk too much about *Moonraker*. There's too many surprises in it. Let's just say the implication is that next time we see *Jaws*, he'll be pushing a baby carriage.

With his teeth, you mean!

Left: Kiel as he appears in *Force Ten from Navarone* (1978). Right: *Jaws* leaps into action in *Moonraker* (1979).



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SEE IT AT A CINEMA NEAR YOU THIS SUMMER

THE LOST WORLDS

Feature by John Fleming



In 1922, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was in America, giving a series of lectures on his obsession, spiritualism. On 2nd June 1922, he attended a meeting of The Society of American Magicians at the Hotel McAlpin in New York. After Harry Houdini's famous trunk escape and various demonstrations of sleight of hand, Conan Doyle took the stage. He told Houdini his intention was "to provide a little mystification to those who have so often and so successfully mystified others". He talked to the assembled audience about the possibility of preternatural materialisation from the past, then gave a demonstration. Just what he showed the audience that night was revealed on the front page of the next morning's *New York Times*.

The headline read *Dinosaurs cavort in film for Doyle—spiritist mystifies world-famed magicians with pictures of prehistoric beasts*. What he had shown, unexplained, was test footage for a proposed new film based on one of his books. The hysterical publicity had two results: Conan Doyle had to bring his practical joke to an end . . . and a court case was threatened from an unexpected source.

The film was to be the first major production to use the technique of stop-frame animation, in which models were filmed one frame at a time and moved very

slightly between each shot. When the final footage was projected, the models "came alive" and moved. The technique was largely the creation of special effects wizard Willis O'Brien (who later created the title star for *King Kong*). But, when the Conan Doyle "joke" was splashed across the newspapers, O'Brien's former employer Major Herbert M. Dawley threatened a \$100,000 lawsuit for patent infringement. He claimed O'Brien had pirated an animation process invented for Dawley's film productions *The Glory of Slumber* and *Along the Moonshine Trail*. The case was settled before it came to court and, in July 1924, First National Pictures started full production "after six and a half years' preparation and research" on their \$1 million silent movie *The Lost World*, directed by Harry O. Hoyt, a former scriptwriter for D. W. Griffith. (A second unit was directed by William Dowling).

The plot is quite simple. Scientist finds monster; scientist captures monster; scientist loses monster. But the film's impact was immense. It was a landmark in special effects work, it had a major influence on the style and content of the later *King Kong* (1933) and, both directly and indirectly, it influenced the classic monster and science fiction films of the 1950s.

The central character in the story is

Professor Challenger (based on Conan Doyle's physiology professor and named after a corvette owned by a prominent figure at Edinburgh University). Conan Doyle was so enamoured of his Challenger creation that he dressed up as the Professor for publicity photographs, wandered round London in the disguise and (according to his biographer) his wife found it difficult to persuade him not to wear the costume in bed.

The story of *The Lost World* concerns an expedition led by Challenger and Lord John Roxton (modelled on Irish politician Sir Roger Casement). They travel to an isolated plateau in South America, cut off from all development since prehistoric times. The place actually exists. It is Mount Roraima, a vast plateau rising to 9,000 feet on the borders of Guyana, Venezuela and Brazil. Ringed by overhanging cliffs, it is infested with scorpions, centipedes, poisonous bird-eating spiders and, according to one recent expedition, rats which will eat anything except *Oxo Cubes*. Back in the early years of the century, Conan Doyle's imaginary expedition found something larger: prehistoric monsters.

Willis O'Brien and sculptor Marcel Delgado made about fifty models, each roughly 18 inches long (the stegosaurus and ceratopsians were a little smaller and the



Opposite: Actress Bessie Love, star of *The Lost World* (1925) poses for a publicity picture with a friend. Above left: The *Apemias* (played by Bull Montana) bares his abundant teeth. Above: The same *Apemias* in action in *The Lost World* (1925). A repeat of this scene turned up in the later *King Kong* when the ape reels in a fleeing sailor climbing down a rope ladder.

brontosaurus considerably bigger). The monsters were made of rubber so they would not melt under the hot movie lights. They had articulated wooden frames with wire veins and ball-and-socket joints for all movable parts. Muscles were made of sponge rubber and the skin of latex and sheets of rubber dental dam. The monsters could visibly "breathe" because they had internal bladders into which air could be injected and extracted by a hidden pump. Varnish was used for saliva and dark chocolate for blood. An aerial brace with thin wires allowed the monsters to run, fly or leap as required. (Delgado based his models on Charles R. Knight's paintings and reconstructions in the Field and American Museums of Natural History.)

Another "plus" for the film was special effects man Ralph Hammeras, who had

recently developed and patented the "glass shot" technique by which live-action scenes could be shot through a sheet of glass on which was painted a fantastic setting too difficult or too expensive to build.

The film publicity sold *The Lost World* as "The strange, unknown world of prehistoric monsters as big as 15 elephants—flying reptiles as big as aeroplanes . . . A vivid, startling story with love and romance at every turn."

For the first time, live actors appeared in the same shot as animated models. Areas of the dinosaur scenes were "matted" out: a black mask was introduced into the picture and into this was printed a shot of live actors against matching backgrounds. It was an enormous advance in film techniques although, by modern standards, the quality of the image is very low.

The stop-frame animation sequences with the dinosaurs were shot on a set 200ft x 300ft. Some of the jungle leaves and fronds were made of sheet metal to give better stability. The miniature jungles were about 6ft wide by about 4ft deep: the shallowness allowed technicians to reach the back of the set without disturbing the foreground foliage.

At the climax of the film's jungle scenes, there is a volcanic eruption. There is no such eruption in Conan Doyle's novel but the *Lost World* film's innovation is an idea which seems to have cropped up in every *lost world* picture since then. (In the original release print, this sequence was printed on red stock to give it a fiery look). The eruption results in a visually stunning mass-stampede of dinosaurs with what appear to be hundreds of prehistoric creatures

running across the screen in the foreground while the volcano erupts in the background. No mean feat for a film made in the early 1920s and, although the modern viewer has to make some allowances for the crudity of the technique, it is still an impressive scene.

This stampede took place on a 75ft x 150ft set with Hammer's glass shots providing cloudy skies and some foreground foliage. Masking near the bottom of the frame meant that live-action scenes with real actors could be added later. If that sounds complicated, it was. Don't forget that, for every minute of animation seen on the screen, the film-makers had to make 960 separate movements of one or more model creatures. The animation itself was shot with seven cameras locked in position, their shutters operated simultaneously from a central control point. In all, the film took 14 months of technical production.

There is also the King Kong connection. Challenger's party reach their *Lost World* plateau by crossing a felled tree which serves as a bridge and from which one of the party falls when the tree-bridge is lifted by a monster. (Exactly the same thing happens in King Kong.) The *Lost World* party find a single primitive apeman living in the jungle—in the novel, it's a whole tribe. When one of the men tries to escape down the side of a cliff using a rope ladder, the apeman reels in the ladder in the same way that King Kong reels in Ann Darrow and Driscoll when they climb down the vine in the later film. In both *The Lost World* and King Kong, a monster is captured in the jungle and taken back to a densely-populated city where it escapes and causes havoc.

In Conan Doyle's original novel of *The Lost World*, an egg is brought back to London and a pterodactyl hatches. In the film, the monster is a fully-grown bronto-

saurus which runs amok in London, terrifying running crowds like Kong, toppling buildings like Godzilla and escaping into the River Thames in a whole series of scenes which seemed to re-appear in *Gorgo* (1959). In *The Lost World*, the scenes of panic in London took two nights to shoot on a huge set 220 yards long, filled with 2,000 extras, 200 cars and 6 double-decker buses, all supervised by 24 assistant directors and shot with 18 cameras. To show the model dinosaur in this maelstrom of live-action, an early travelling-matte process was used.

Unlike the 1950s films (but like King Kong) the monster was intended to be a sympathetic creature, as the original script makes clear in its description of a scene in which the brontosaurus causes pandemonium in Piccadilly Circus:

"When the Brontosaurus is halfway down toward the camera, it pauses, baffled and harassed by the fleeing crowds, weaving its head about trying to find a way of escape. Cut to close-up of brontosaurus to register its expression as it weaves its head about—as afraid of the people as the people are afraid of it." Later, the script calls for "a medium shot of the brontosaurus—limping—bleeding—panting—its side heaving—snapping blindly at its tormentors. Finding itself surrounded, it hacks out onto the bridge..."

The *Lost World* was released early in 1925, originally running for ten reels (about 2 hours), though existing prints of the film are only five reels long. One of the missing scenes in London had the brontosaurus' face appearing at the window of a third-storey room, disturbing a poker game (shades of King Kong again).

The film was a resounding success and, in fact, was chosen by the German Air Service as the first-ever in-flight movie. Willis

O'Brien was able to persuade RKO to back his Creation project. That collapsed, but led on to King Kong.

As for Marcel Delgado's miniature dinosaurs, they were given to the Los Angeles Museum of Arts and Sciences, but eventually the rubber began to sulphurise and disintegrate, so they were stored away. Years later, when a new wing was added to the museum, their remains were accidentally sealed between walls. Pretty soon, though, they must have been turning in their accidental graves.

Irwin Allen re-made *The Lost World* in 1960. Starburst contributor John Brosnan writes in his excellent book *Future Tense* that Allen is "among those who have kneed science fiction in the groin". In his 1956 film *The Animal World*, Allen had included dinosaur sequences by Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen. But, for no good apparent reason, his *Lost World* uses not stop-motion monsters but photographically-enlarged lizards.

The plot is considerably hampered by Jill St John in skin-tight pink trousers (romantic interest), a tiny poodle with a jewelled collar (animal interest) and Claude Rains in a red beard (Technicolor interest). On their first day in the *Lost World*, one member of the party is attacked by a large tulip-like vegetable, another by a tree with serpent-like boughs. Then it's down-hill or, rather, down-plateau all the way with a fluorescent green spider, what the publicity blurb called the *Death battle of the Jurassic dinosaurs*, the discovery of diamonds which will make everyone rich, the now-obligatory volcanic explosion and back to civilization for—fate worse than death—the attack of the massed film critics. They just don't make lost worlds like they used to.





Opposite: Milton Delgado's rubber-musaur models fight it out on a miniature set in front of a painted backdrop. Above: The artwork for the German poster of the later Irwin Allen version also titled *The Lost World* (1960).

The Lost World (1925)

Bessie Love (as Paula White), Lloyd Hughes (Ed Malone), Lewis Stone (Sir John Roxton), Wallace Beery (Professor Challenger), Arthur Hoyt (Professor Summerville), Alma Bennett (Gladys Hungerford), Virginia Brownne Fair (Marquette), Bull Montana (The Ape-man), Finch Smith (Asian), Jules Cowles (Zambo), Margaret McWade (Mrs Challenger), Charles Wellesley (Major Hibbard), George Bunny (Colin Mc Ardle). Directed by Harry O. Hoyt. Screenplay by Marion Fairfax based on *The Lost World* by

Arthur Conan Doyle. Photographed by J. Devereaux, Arthur Edeson, and Homer Scott. Edited by George McGuire. Art direction Milton Menasco. Special effects by Willis O'Brien, Marcel Delgado, Ralph Hammeras and Fred Jackman. Makeup by Cecil Holland. Produced by Earl Hudson. A First National Pictures film.

The Lost World (1960)

Jill St John (as Jennifer Holmes), David Hedison (Ed Malone), Michael Roemer (Sir John Roxton), Claude Rains (Professor Challenger), Richard Haydn (Professor

Summerville), Fernando Lamas (Gomez), Ray Stricklyn (David), Jay Novello (Costa). Produced and Directed by Irwin Allen. Screenplay by Irwin Allen and Charles Bennett based on *The Lost World* by Arthur Conan Doyle. Photographed by Winton Hech. Edited by Hugh S. Fowler. Art direction by Duncan Cramer and Walter M. Scott. Special photographic effects by L. B. Abbott, James B. Gordon and Emil Kosa Jr. Effects supervised by Willis O'Brien. Makeup by Ben Nye. Technical advice by Henry E. Lester.

THE SPACEMAN AND KING ARTHUR

Review by John Brosnan



Above: The hapless astronaut, Tom Trimble (Dennis Dugan), finds that his space shuttle has been hurried back in time to the days of King Arthur. His space "armor" causes some concern among the locals. Left: The evil Sir Modred (Jim Dale) corners Trimble into crossing lances with hilarious results.

Opposite top: Dennis Dugan as Tom Trimble in *The Spaceman and King Arthur*. Opposite below: 'Hardly Cape Kennedy' but it gets the job done! Trimble blasts off from the age of Arthur headed for his own time.

It's quite a confession to make but I rather enjoyed this movie. That may be because Disney live-action films have become more sophisticated since I last saw one or it could be due to the strong British influence in this particular production. At times, in fact, it seemed almost Monty Pythonesque in its approach, reminding me of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and *Jabberwocky*. Not, I hasten to add, that it's as funny or in as excellent bad taste as the above two films—the aim of the Disney organisation is still, after all, to provide family entertainment—it's just that it was more amusing than I expected a Disney film had the right to be. But perhaps the Disney concept of what constitutes family entertainment is beginning to change . . . I mean there are even some jokes about sex in this film, a subject that never reared its head in the Disney films of my youth (it was all dogs, horses, penguins, bears and the occasional giant squid).

With *The Spaceman and King Arthur* the Disney people do at least have the advantage of having a good, reliable tale to base their picture on—that of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. As far as I know it's been filmed at least three times before: back in the silent days, in 1933 with Will Rogers and in 1940 with Bing Crosby—and the device of having some modern character get knocked on the head and dream he's back in the past (it's invariably medieval or Roman times) has been exploited countless times by film



makers. Most of the humour is generated by the "culture clash"—confusion over the difference in customs, amusing anachronisms, misunderstanding of slang and so on. The only major difference in this Disney version is that the hero goes back via a time warp rather than by a bang on the head.

Dennis Dugan, following in the cinematic footsteps of Will Rogers and Bing Crosby, plays Tom Trimble, a young American scientist who accidentally gets locked in an experimental space ship along with his robot double, Hermes, and blasted off into the unknown. After a trip through time and space he lands in England in the time of King Arthur (whenever that was—opinions vary) and immediately encounters a girl, Alisande (Sheila White) and the villain of the piece, Sir Mordred (Jim Dale) who hauls him off to the court of King Arthur (Kenneth More).

The resulting comedy, as Trimble tries to prove he is not a demon, follows a fairly predictable pattern but the use of the space age technology gives a new twist to most of the action. There's an amusing sword fight between Trimble and Mordred, during which the latter's sword becomes magnetised and attracts every piece of metal around, eventually becoming so heavy Mordred can't lift it, and the jousting sequence where Hermes the robot is dismembered limb by limb is funny, reminding me of the much sicker scene in *Holy Grail* when John Cleese is bloodily hacked to pieces but won't lie down. And there's the big climactic battle between Arthur's and Mordred's men, with Trimble's space ship giving invaluable aid to



the king, which is spectacular enough but could have been more inventive.

Dennis Dugan is fine as Trimble—the sort of brash, earnest young American with appalling taste in clothes that you try to avoid talking to in pubs—but it's really the English members of the cast who provide the most pleasure, such as Kenneth More and John Le Mesurier as the cowardly Sir Gawain (their scenes together are a delight), Rodney Bewes as a lecherous page and the marvellous Ron Moody as Merlin though I did feel he was a bit wasted and could have been given more to do. Same goes for Jim Dale as Mordred—he looks fine but the part should have been made more substantial.

On the technical side it's quite an impressive production (a real castle, Alnwick Castle in Northumberland, was used for many sequences)—sets, costumes and physical effects are fine but the optical and model effects are somewhat perfunctory and not up to the usual Disney standard.

The Spaceman and King Arthur (1979)

Dennis Dugan (as Tom Trimble), Sheila White (Alisande), Jim Dale (Sir Mordred), Kenneth More (King Arthur), John Le Mesurier (Sir Gawain), Ron Moody (Merlin).

Directed by Russ Mayberry. Screenplay by Don Tait, Associate Producer Hugh Attwood. Produced by Ron Miller. A Walt Disney Production. Gen. U.



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PORTFOLIO

ROBOTS

Way back in *Starburst* 7 we presented an overview of movie robots from *Metropolis* to *Star Wars*. Since that feature appeared we have discovered a cache of stills from assorted robot films which were just too good to waste. Captions by Alan Murdoch.





KING KONG ESCAPES

starring

Technicolor 70

RHODES REASON LINDA MILLER
MIE HAMA AKIRA TAKARADA

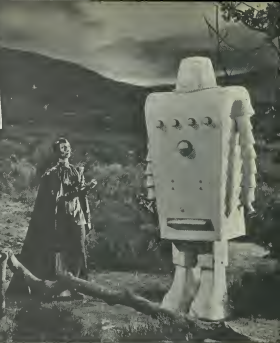


Opposite: In *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) the alien visitor Klaatu (Michael Rennie) was accompanied by a huge robot. *Goat*. Inside the jointless, rubberized costume was Lark Morin, chairman of the famous Grauman's Chinese Theatre, L.A. The story on which the film was based (Farwell to the Master) had the robot as the monster and the humanist robot as the servant but the producers of the movie felt this would be too confusing for the 1951 audience. *The Day the Earth Stood Still* is scheduled as an installment of our Starburst of Classics series in the not-too-distant future. Also: *King Kong Escapes* (1967). A Japanese offering from Toho Studios, has a resupposed King Kong battling to a standstill by a robot duplicate of himself. As can be seen from this still, the robot was just as destructive as the monkey he was constructed to resemble. The most foul antiheroes cranking in their arms. Left: After the success of the *Daijaks* on tv, producer Milton Subotsky brought the creatures to the cinema screens in *Daijaks—Invasion Earth 2150 AD* (1966). The *Daijaks* captured Earthlings and turned them into Robomen who went on to conquer the world and lost of the *Daijaks* movies.



top. In the sf film from Toho, *The
Godzilla* (1957) aliens land in Japan to seek
refuge for breeding purposes, aided and abetted by
this giant, marauding robot. Opposite below: A
common mistake among sf movie fans is to label this
metallic invader from Earth as the Flying Saucers or
robot. Much as he resembles a mechanical man he
is, in fact, an alien in a suit of armour. Left: The
robots in *Flesh Gordon* (1972) were a send-up of the
tin men that populated the 12-13 chapter serials
between the wars. Below: The title star of *Tobor the
Great* (1954) was a telepathic robot, complete with
emotions, who was designed to pilot the first space
shot. Right: *Colossus of New York* was another of
those "good robot turns bad" type films. A man's
brain is grafted into a huge robot (Ed Wolff) who
can fire death rays from his eyes.





Top left: When a super-computer is taken over by spies, scientists must battle the robot drone, Gog, for survival. Gog (1954).



Above: *The British Girl from Mars* (1954) featured an alien girl and her robot who came to Earth in search of men for breeding purposes. Sound familiar?

Left: Trying to avoid capture, Woody Allen disguises himself as a robot in *Sleepers* (1973).

Further to Tony Crawley's special Cannes Film Festival report which fills out our Things to Come column this issue, there was one film screened at the festival this year that doesn't qualify as science fiction, but still deserves to be brought to the attention of *Starburst* readers.

The best British film screened at Cannes was Tony Palmer's *The Space Movie*, with music by Mike Oldfield, a double delight for me: an Oldfield fan and every bit as much as a fan of those NASA moon shots. Palmer's film combines both in a wonderful, at times moving, tribute to the space jockeys from Cape Kennedy...and indeed some of their cosmonaut colleagues from Russia. It's the first film from Virgin Records and as their chief, Richard Branson (the film's co-producer) says, "Space seemed right for Oldfield's music. We realised there had never been a real version of 2001—a movie which drew on the incredible footage from Mars, the moon and so on." NASA liked the notion as well, and for the first time allowed film-makers unlimited access to their miles and miles of space film.

Tony Palmer got a team of editors together, spending 18 months on checking their exclusive footage (most of which was shot in 70 mm): "It would have taken about 600 years to see all the material," points out Branson. "What they tried to do was pick out the most interesting footage, stuff people haven't seen before."

The film is a celebration of space achievement, covering everything from Jack Kennedy's promise to get to the moon, "which in many ways may have the key to our future on Earth," pronouncements from rocketry wizard Werner von Braun, here's one of the finest space launches ever collated, Neil Armstrong's "giant leap for mankind" on the lunar surface, the moon buggy, and a distinctly moving sequence or indeed several space-walks. All this plus Oldfield's music, old and new—with *Tubular Bells* being utilised for the third or fourth time on screen, after *The Exorcist* and *Vladimír La jeune fille assassinée*.

The film was shown in Cannes in 70mm with full cinematic sound—and I'm sorry I had to leave before the end because of an interview engagement. I'll be the first in line when it opens in Britain. Full thanks to Virgin Records particularly to director Palmer—and indeed to the astronaut cameramen, most of whom could take up film-making for a living any time. Some of their footage was spectacularly unbelievable.

Nice touch, the narration was by ex-Bishop, alias Straker from the Andersons' old tv show, *U.F.O.* His mid-Atlantic tones fitted the movie every bit as much as Oldfield's splendidly futuristic music, which, obviously enough will be a new Virgin album before you read this.

THE SPACE MOVIE



STARBURST TALKS TO DEREK MEDDINGS, EFFECTS EXPERT OF

MOONRAKER

Interview by John Brosnan

Last month *Starburst* talked to award-winning special effects wizard Derek Meddings about his early career and his involvement with such projects as *Thunderbirds*, *The Land That Time Forgot* and the Bond series. This month Meddings speaks about his latest special effects assignment *Moonraker* and the problems he encountered.

Moonraker is different from all the other Bond films in that for the first time the locations weren't being shot at Pinewood but at a studio in France—only Meddings and his team of effects men were based at the English studio. The reasons for shooting *Moonraker* in France apparently revolves around the subject of tax-dodge to the increasing harshness of the British tax laws producer Albert R. Broccoli had to move both himself and his company out of the country. However, filming a Bond epic in France has created a number of problems, mainly because the Paris studio concerned has never tried to handle a production of this size before and as a result of the various teething troubles costs have risen rather higher than expected. In the long run it may turn out that it would have been cheaper to make the film in England, tax problems and

"Moonraker is going to be factual in its space scenes, whereas *Star Wars* was a space fantasy."

all. I asked Meddings if moving the main Bond unit to France had caused him any particular problems.

"There's always a problem when you're separated from the main unit because then you've got to learn in context by phone and that's not as easy as one thinks. When you get through to the French studios you either don't understand what they're saying or they don't understand you. Then when you get someone who knows what you're talking about you can find that the director is at another stage or at a different studio and by the time he gets to the phone and finds you back you've forgotten what you were going to ask him in the first place. I'm exaggerating, of course, but it is difficult to explain what you have in mind for a special effects show over the phone because so often you need to draw what you want to do to communicate the idea quickly and simply. Someone can so easily misinterpret what you're trying to describe over the phone . . .



I asked if, in that case, it would have been easier for Meddings to do the effects in France as well. "I wouldn't do the effects over there," he said, "because Pinewood is a fantastic studio and I know everybody here. I not only have my own crew here who know how I work and who I can totally rely upon but I have a lot of studio personnel as well who are also excellent—riggers, carpenters, electricians, etc who I've known over the years and who I like working with . . . it's like working with a bunch of friends. I don't say this makes your problems easier but at least it makes solving them a little more pleasant because you know that everyone is trying their best to assist you in getting what you want. At Pinewood I have this enthusiasm behind me which I wouldn't get elsewhere, and of course there's the problem of communication when you're working abroad. I know because I've done it . . . I had a foreign crew on *Zero Population* and though some of them could speak English you still get misinterpretations . . . I mean this happens when you're speaking to people who are English."

I gazed at the storyboard that surrounded us and asked Meddings if he was obliged to follow it drawing by drawing. "No, not really," he replied. "I'm bound to it as much as I want to be. I give the artist a free hand to be as elaborate as he wants . . . because if I was the producer of a picture on which I was also doing the special effects I'd probably

"We are going to add sound effects to the space shots in *Moonraker* which isn't factual."

design them so simply on the storyboard they'd be terrible. While I was doing the storyboard I'd probably say to myself, well, I won't put that in because it would be a terrific effects problem so I'll do a simple alternative. So it's good to let someone have a free hand and have them put in whatever they think should be on the storyboard, no matter how difficult it might be to shoot. If he draws a spaceship doing something complicated I don't want him to say, no, we can't do that shot so I won't draw it . . . he can draw whatever he wants. And over the weeks as one stands and looks at these storyboards you think of ideas of how to overcome the problems involved in each shot . . . ho-ho, huh."

But what happens if there is no way of reproducing a particular drawing on film because it is too difficult or whatever—have you ever *hence* to change the storyboard, I asked him? "As long as it doesn't alter the story and I don't kill Bond off by mistake I can

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MEDDINGS, EFFECTS EXPERT OF RAKER.



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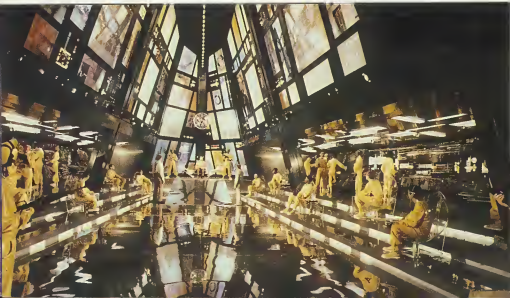
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But what happens if there is no way of reproducing a particular drawing on film because it is too difficult or whatever—have you come *blanche* to change the storyboard, I asked him? "As long as it doesn't alter the story and I don't kill Bond off by mistake I can



*Above: The US Space Marines are ready for trouble in **Moonraker** (1979). Below: The spectacular interior of space station operated by the villain Drax.*



change the way we're going to do it, but I always consult the director first otherwise he would get a surprise. I just can't tear a few pages out of the script or tear up the storyboard saying I can't do that scene—that's admitting defeat... there's always a way of doing it somehow."

The storyboard was dominated by spaceships and other space-age technology and I asked how his methods for shooting this type of material differed from those used by the *Star Wars* people. "Well, from what I can

"The space shuttle we use in the *Moonraker* film is completely authentic."

gather John Dykstre in *Star Wars* did his flying sequences in a totally different way... his models were suspended in front of a blue screen on a rod covered in the same blue material and the camera did all the actual moving. But blue screen worries me as I think it worries most people (see *Superman the Effects in Starburst 7* for a description of the blue screen process). You do part of a shot and then several weeks later they start putting in the background and if you don't get the right balance in the lighting either the background or the foreground model seems to be brighter or darker and it doesn't match. And of course if it's not done in controlled conditions you can get shrinkage so that you end up with a dark image around the spaceship. You certainly wouldn't notice it if the spaceship was flying against a space background but if it passes in front of a planet or another spacecraft you get this fringing around it.

"It's worrying because it can be several months before you see the shot, depending on how much you put into the laboratory to be combined, and realize that it's terrible. I don't think anything can beat being able to see the finished shot the day after you've done it, so I like to be able to film as many of the image components as possible at the same time."

I mentioned the large spindle-shaped drum painted to represent the Earth that I had seen in the studio. Presumably this enabled Meddings to film his models against an Earth background all in one shot whereas in *Star Wars* the background would have been added later. I asked if the drum was his own invention. "I don't know. It's hard to say. I've certainly never seen it being used anywhere else."

"I used the method first when I did

"Sometimes we fly the models on wires. Sometimes we use rods, or you can attach the model to a sheet of glass."

Doppelgänger. It seemed to me, after weeks of struggling trying to think how I could get the Earth to revolve that this was the only way to do it... unless you made a huge monster of a sphere. It's just like a cylinder really. Ours is quite large because we're trying to put things in front of it but you can make them any size you want depending on the shot you want. I used this system on *Superman* too."

I asked how a model would be filmed in



James Bond (Roger Moore) is surrounded by some of Earth's most attractive aeronauts. From left to right: Chichinou Karpiher, Françoise Goyat, Iek Bochenko, Catherine Serre and Ann Lonnberg.

relation to the dummy Earth. Was it simply filmed in front of the drum? "Well, on lots of occasions we do just that. We have to get it running really smoothly so that we can shoot 16 frames a second—if we can get the depth of focus and the amount of light we need we can run at high speeds. We have to do a certain amount of cheating the same as I think anyone who is using blue screen would do. And there are some shots where you can't avoid using blue screen..."

Whereas the models in *Star Wars* were stationary while the camera provided the illusion of movement, Meddings' models actually have to move. How is this achieved? "Well, we use all sorts of methods. We fly them on wires but not always. Sometimes we put them on rods but if you're shooting

against certain backgrounds you have to use wires, or you can attach the model to a sheet of glass. Every shot has its own set of problems."

Was there any pressure on Meddings to top the effects in *Star Wars*? "Not really because the difference is that our picture is going to be factual in its space scenes whereas *Star Wars* was a space fantasy. By the time *Moonraker* comes out the Americans will have launched their space shuttle—well, I hope they will but they're having problems at the moment—and I think people will be able to compare the shots in our film with the shots of the real shuttle craft. We have an adviser from NASA here at the studio so he sees everything we do and tells us if we're doing it wrong. So I'm confident that what you'll see

on the screen in *Moonraker* will be factual as far as the space shuttle is concerned."

I asked if it was more difficult having to be factual in the space scenes than being able to let loose as in *Star Wars*? "Yes, I think it is. Although I must admit that we are going to add sound effects to the space stuff which, of course, isn't factual. I don't know at this stage if we're going to put on the sound of motors as the space shuttle goes by or whether it's

what we're trying to simulate in *Moonraker*... we're trying to get the Earth to look real. Because if you can get the audience to accept that it's the real Earth on the screen then you can hang anything in front of it and they will accept that too."

I asked about the space shuttle. How big was the actual model?

"We've got varying size models. Our largest is about six feet long and we've got them right down to little tiny things, like dinky toys, for some shots. We even had to shoot the space shuttle being launched which was quite exciting. We showed it being launched from the ground which is how the Americans will do it. A lot of people seem to think it's going to be launched from the back of a 747 but that has only been done for test flights within the atmosphere. When the thing actually goes into space it will be launched standing on its tail like any other rocket. The only difference is that some of our launching sequences will take place in an underground chamber but we are going to do one launch from the surface of a desert somewhere."

"The space shuttle we use is completely authentic. AIMS, the company that has been building the real shuttle for NASA, invited us to their base in California and they were most helpful. They gave us all the photographs

"There were no problems at all in getting information because it's not a secret operation or a military project. So our interiors are going to be the exact replica of the real thing. And from the way they described their proposed launching system I believe ours will be exactly the same. Certainly the NASA men with us, Eric Burgess, is thrilled to bits with what we've shot so far."

I indicated the section of the storyboard

"There are some shots where you can't avoid using the blue screen."

just going to be music or some weird electronic effects but it certainly adds to the shots. In our rushes we compare the same shots mute and then with sound and it really becomes a totally different shot."

And what does the NASA adviser think of that?

"Well he agrees that we should put the sound on because now it's more or less expected by audiences. Of course, having said it's going to be factual, if we add sound that will destroy the authenticity, but visually it's going to be factual. Anyway the sound part is all up to the director... he may eventually decide to leave the sound off."

I made the observation that the set of problems facing him on this picture were totally different from those on *The Spy Who Loved Me*.

"Yes, because a tanker is something that everyone in the audience has had the opportunity to see, either on newsreels or in real life when they've been on holiday. Now when it comes to space, people have seen documentary footage of American spacecraft but it's always a bit confusing because you never see the space ships cruising past the camera as you would, say, in 2001 or *Star Wars*. Instead you see close-ups of parts of them or whatever because usually the footage is being taken by a man who is in the thing. But what you invariably see in this type of footage are shots of the Earth and that's

"I wouldn't do the effects for *Moonraker* in France."

they could lay their hands on and all the information available. We also saw the space shuttle itself because they were actually building two while we were there and one was nearly completed. I think it was the one they were going to do all their final atmospheric tests with because they were attaching all these glass tiles to it which will protect it during re-entry." (These same tiles caused problems during the subsequent test flights and are one of the reasons why the actual launch has been postponed, so it seems the *Moonraker*'s shuttle will boast the real one into space.)

"Pinewood is a fantastic studio... it's like working with a bunch of friends!"

dealing with the villain's huge space station. How authentic would that be? "Well, it's supposed to be a thousand foot in diameter so it's obviously quite large but not an impossibility. All the Americans need is the money and they can fill the whole heavens with stuff like that."

I commented that the model of the station was presumably quite large. Surely it was too big to film in front of the revolving Earth cylinder so how did Meddings go about getting both it and the Earth in the same shot? "Yes, it is a large model... about sixteen feet across... and we've also got a number of sections of it, some full-scale. We would have to matte that against the Earth, but not with a blue screen. We'll do it either with front or back projection. We hang the model before a front projection screen which will project a plate of the revolving drum that we've already shot. I don't mind those type of matting shots because you can see the results the following day."

"I'm shooting the space station in the giant 007 Stage where we did the interior of the tanker in *The Spy Who Loved Me*... I need enough room to be able to get the station and the other models in together and be able to wander around them with the camera. We're also going to build a rather large full-scale section of the space shuttle in the 007 Stage too."

In an interview the producer Albert Broccoli

Below: Holly Goodhead (Lois Chiles) and James Bond (Roger Moore) experience the effects of free-fall. Opposite above: Sir Hugo Drax (Michael Lonsdale) is the megalomaniac millionaire who wants to rule the world.





announced that the climax of *Moonraker* would consist of a "20 minute battle in outer space". I asked Meddings about this and he gave a wry smile, saying: "I hope he's right... it will be the big effects sequence in the film and it really is going to be a problem. I don't know if it will last 20 minutes on the screen, that will depend on the director and the editor."

"Scenes in space, like underwater scenes, can sometimes be a bit slow and there may have to be some quick cuts to speed things up... so it will probably be a shorter sequence in the finished film. Shorter but hopefully a fantastic one. But as you talk to me now I'm dreading it because I know the problems we're going to get involved in. They're not insurmountable problems, it's really the problem with time. Every day that

"The space station is a large model... about sixteen feet across."

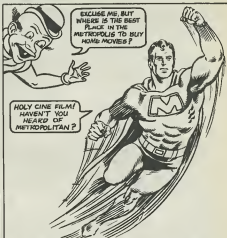
goes by you look at the storyboard and you feel that you've done a lot, then you look at another corner of the room and there are all the other sequences that you haven't even started. We've already been shooting for three months and there's still a hell of a lot to do. But I suppose like every other picture we'll get it done in the end."

Well, by now we all know the answer to that one. And from what I've seen of the finished special effects in *Moonraker* at the time or writing Derek Meddings and his team can claim another triumph.

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STARBURST

LETTERS

"Kisatu berede niko"—next to "Keep watching the skies"—is the most famous line in the history of sci-fi cinema? There's interesting! Has anyone ever mentioned to you the most famous phrase ever uttered on film "May the Force be with you"? It beats "Play it again, Sam" any day of the week.

But as for the rest of *Starburst*, the *Supermen* effects interview flew miles above the rest of the magazine. The Posters in the middle and on the back left much to be desired.

Henry Clarke, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.

I have just finished reading issues 7 and 8 of *Starburst* and I must say the magazine seems to be getting better with each passing month.

In issue 7, the *Battlestar Galactica* review was interesting but didn't really contain anything new. I'd also like to add that I can see the same thing happening to *Galactica* as happened to series such as *Logan's Run*, in which the heroes go through adventure after adventure without getting any closer to their goal. In the end, viewer interest wanes and dies.

I especially like the reviews of the classic of films *This Island Earth* and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

The *Book World* reviews of the various sci-fi magazines made a refreshing change from the usual books and on the whole *Starburst* 8 is the best to date.

Finally I would just like to add that I feel the covers of *Starburst* are getting to be a little unimaginative and I would prefer something like the covers of the first two issues of the magazine.

I. D. Churchward, Torquay, Devon.

It was nice to hear Gerry Anderson finally speaking out against those clever-farmer reviewers and their "wooden actors' cracks. Actually, one of the chief culprits, John Brown, hasn't been half bad, lately. I suppose he grows on you. And even if he is an infuriating go-and-so I suppose he serves his purpose. Better an infuriating go-and-so than someone who merely copies out the publicity.

The Allen pages was nice. But the American magazines will probably have published their Allen reviews long before *Starburst*. I don't see why the Americans should have first crack at the film when it was shot in British studios.

Finally, I'm getting pretty tired of the new type of snobbery which seems to be springing up via magazines like *Starburst*. It mainly takes the form of readers letters and takes the attitude that if film's special effects aren't 100% convincing then the film is a loss. And it's these same fans who are incapable of suspending their disbelief and cannot keep from ascribing to see how all the explosions and space-battles are done who demand in-depth, behind-the-scenes features on how the special effects were done.

I really don't care if you can see the wires that Christopher Reeve flew on. Disregarding the fact that if you look hard enough for anything you'll find it, I don't see how these people can peep up the chance of letting the special effects just wash over them and become part of the fantasy. At the same time as people are boasting how intelligent and profound of films are becoming, there seems to be

an increasing emphasis of hardware over people. Isn't it time we started looking at films as stories rather than as excuses for special effects?

Graeme Bennett, Grimsby, Lincoln.

In your interview with Gerry Anderson (*Starburst* 8) you state that Isaac Asimov criticised *Space 1999* for its lack of attention to scientific details, with which Mr Anderson partially agreed. However, my main criticism of *Space* and *UFO* appeared to be the general lack of understanding of the enormity of space and the time involved in crossing it.

Though *UFO* seems to have been shown to be able to travel faster than light in one episode, a reconnaissance satellite from Earth is programmed to follow an alien ship back to its home base. Now, at no stage in Earth portrayed as having the technology to travel faster than light. But the satellite dutifully plods along behind the spaceship with pictures shot by the satellite due back on Earth in a mere 20 hours. The implication here was that the aliens came from outside our solar system. The result is a lot of conflicting information, and confusion on the part of the viewer. However I enjoyed *UFO* and was prepared to ignore loose ends like this.

Space 1999 compounded the fault even further. As the moon moves majestically away from Earth at no time is it suggested that it is moving faster than light. If the show had been following established scientific theory Koenig and company would have been sent by the time the moon reached the outskirts of our solar system. Instead, the moon pops up in all sorts of odd places, and with each episode is some considerable way from its last location. Moreover, the moon seems to be able to loiter in the vicinity of the planet featured in any one story and then as the credits roll it promptly speeds off towards next week's location.

There was no real internal logic to either *Space 1999* or *UFO* and to say that of can cover a multitude of unexplainable events is a retrograde statement. Science fiction has long prided itself in being logical—if it isn't it becomes Magic or Fantasy and has no right to be labelled Science Fiction.

M. A. Hasley, Cropton, Leics.

Though I enjoy your magazine very much, I have certain quibbles with points raised in *Book World* in *Starburst* 8. When reviewing *Starlog* your writers say that the art and science articles make the magazine "rather boring".

Science is the very basis of good science fiction. Science fiction magazines have, included science fact articles since the days of the pulps (*Amazing*, in the early thirties, was one of the pioneers). Granted your reviewers may have been looking at the magazine and its content from an sf made viewpoint, but it still seems a rather sweeping generalisation.

Anyway, I wish you all the best with future issues.

Brian Willis, Port Talbot, W Glamorgan.

Sorry you disagreed with Alex Carpenter's review of *Starlog*, Brian. We are sure that the "Science fact content of science fiction" debate will continue to rage wherever there are sf fans, but we

would like to clarify one point you raised in your letter. The pulp magazines of the thirties, *Amazing* included, published science fact articles not for any noble or aesthetic reasons, but in order to qualify for second class mailing privileges under American postal laws. This meant that subscription copies of the magazine could be mailed at a cheaper rate.

Congratulations on putting together a first class fantasy magazine which (in my opinion) reached a peak with *Starburst* 8.

However, one thing in that issue disturbed me was Michael Jordan's letter, which, in criticising the effects on the *Supermen* movie, mentioned the "wire" which tugged at the Boulder Dam during its destruction. This wire would seem to be a figment of Mr Jordan's imagination, as explosives were actually used in this sequence.

Please try to obtain more information on *The Empire Strikes Back* because all us *Star Wars* fans are counting on you as our main source of information.

Graham Smith, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.

Before going on to my initial comments about *Starburst*, I would like to congratulate you on an excellent magazine and thank you for keeping the price down.

All the issues I have read so far have been well worth the money and each one has been clean cut and well presented. The Hulk article in issue 4 was of particular interest to me as I am a great fan of the superheros and hope you'll have one on Wonder Woman (including a full colour pin up). The *Dark Star* review was excellent and the Doug Trumbull interview is the best I have read so far. I enjoyed all the *Supermen* articles, but felt that you gave a little too much in the way of space to a film which didn't live up to my expectations. I must agree with Michael Jordan of Rochdale in Lancs on his comments about some of the effects which showed through very badly. Both *Silent Running* and *Dark Star* pieces were very good and I feel *Dark Star* deserves another run on the small screen. (BBC2 showed it quite a while ago, I did not enjoy the *Galactica* reviews at all, I think this was because of the film which is a mockery to sf in the cinema and a terrible misuse of John Dykstra's effects. There was virtually no story at all. I certainly would not have known what was going on if I had not read the book previously. I enjoyed the Gerry Anderson interview and hope you'll keep up doing the *Star Wars* 2 news. Of all the things I like to read, *Things to Come* is by far the most interesting, and it astounds me the amount of tv and cinema films that never reach Scotland, I'm sure other Scots readers feel the same way.

All in all I think your mag is the best around and is certainly better than any other Stateside has to offer. Keep up the good work.

Alan Perry, Edinburgh, Scotland.

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• T H I N G S • T O • C

Though little in the way of fantasy was actually screened at the 32nd Cannes Film Festival, many sf projects were announced. So many in fact that our entire *Things to Come* column has been given over this month to the 1979 Festival.

Compiled by Tony Crawley

CANNES CIRCUS

Music and rip-offs of *Animal House* beat out science fantasy in the movie market place of the 1979 Cannes film festival. The Who, Grateful Dead, Neil Young and the film of Hair filled the screens. Even John Carpenter popped up in this area with the theatrical version of his hot made-for-tv-movie, *Elvis, The Movie*. His producer, Dick Clark, is now into *The Birth of the Beatles* no less, while John completes *The Fog*, starring his wife, Adrienne Barbeau, and then re-tells *The China Syndrome* story in the ultimate modern horror tale, *The Prometheus Crisis*. Concerning a scorching nuclear plant meltdown, the storyline comes to us from the authors of *The Glass Inferno*.

On the countless Cannes screens, though, science fiction, fantasy and horror were in exceeding short supply, and what was available was more animation than live-action—thanks to the prodigious tv efforts of Tokyo's Toei Company. Toei's Masayoshi Endo sought our aid in trying to persuade BBC or ITV to buy some (one!) of their sf cartoon series, which sell well elsewhere in the world. We'll do our best in an upcoming feature.

Fantasy was rife, however, in posters—promises of things to come this time next year.



A STAR IS RE-BORN

But—there had to be a but, right?—sf finally made the headlines with the news of a \$12-million sequel project about Stella Star—before we've seen her first adventure in Britain, *Star Crash*. The new venture is *Star Riders*. The mixture is the same as before. Only better—which is what they all say about sequels. *Star Crash* has already staggered both Roger Corman and his New World Pictures outfit by turning out to be their biggest grossing movie (around the \$18-million mark) to date. Odd, then, that Roger has let the inevitable sequel escape to the brand new tie-up of the Israeli Golan-Globus combine and the New York distribution outfit, Cannon.

This strange marriage, which gives the ailing Cannon group a shot in the arm, and more important for the Israelis, provides them with their own US distribution shop, was the first big movie trade headline of the festival. The new partners announced a flock of films; new Israeli product, including Menahem Golan's version of Nobel Prizewinner Isaac Bashevis Singer's

Jewish fantasy, *The Magician of Lublin* (in which Alan Arkin believes he can fly) and parochial Tel Aviv rubbish like *Going Steady* and *My Mother The General*—plus Cannon's library of old fodder, including a very early Robert De Niro film, *The Swap*, and promised sequels to Cannon's first hits, *Joe*, and *The Happy Hooker*. And that seemed to be that, until the final week of the festival, when the new partners flew Caroline Munro in to announce the big, new Stella Star movie to be made in Hollywood, Rome, Bangkok and London.

Caroline Munro, waiting around for photographers in purple tights, said she was thrilled to be playing Stella again—a kind of *Barbarella*, Italian style. Her husband, American actor Judd Hamilton, seemed similarly happy to be stuck inside the robot El again, too. Lewis Coates (alias Luigi Cozzi) will, naturally, be directing once more.

His line producers this time around will be David Winters (who directed *Kirk Douglas's* *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* tv movie; he was also a creative consultant on *The Island of Dr. Moreau*) and Alan Roberts, whose previous credentials include *Scream Bloody Murder*, *Panorama Blue* and *Young Lady Chatterly*. In concert together, Winters and Roberts made the tannish comedy, *Raguet*, bolstered in Cannes by the

visit of Björn Borg. He spent longer at his photo-call (ten minutes, perhaps) than he does in their film.

However, the real coup behind *Star Riders* belongs not to the new Israeli-USA combine, nor to the fine producers, but to Cozzi, director Lewis Coates, himself. He's written the story of the film—and he's persuaded veteran sf author A. E. Van Vogt to tackle the screenplay.

This means Roger Corman has lost out again... Corman's New World firm is about to film Van Vogt's *Computerworld*. But Van Vogt is liable to stick with Cozzi-cum-Coates, in future. They're old pals. When he was 13, Coates started Italy's first sf magazine and by 1965 he was translating various American sf authors into Italian. Eventually, he became editor and agent for such authors as Murray Leinster, Hugo Gernsback and... A. E. Van Vogt. And with Gernsback's blessing, Coates also created the Italian version of the Hugo awards.

Coates started in movies as an assistant director to Dario Argento and later directed several of his own scripts under the Argento aegis. In 1976, he directed *Dedicato a una stella/Dedicated to a Star* (also known as *Stella*, *Hanging on a Star* and *The Last Concert*) with Richard Johnson and Pamela Villorosi. Two years ago, Coates teamed up with his special-effects pal, Armando Valcassa, to introduce the Stella Star character in *Empire of the Stars*. Shooting began in mid-1977 and was completed last year—with the new title *Star Crash*. That's how this particular Star was born.



OME•THINGS•T

Now she's being re-born with the assistance of Manitoba's A. E. Van Vogt. Author of more than 45 books (with sales beyond 50,000,000 world-wide), Van Vogt has picked up just about every sf honour going, from the '79 literature award of the American Academy of Science Fiction to the Ann Radcliffe Literature Award in 1968 from the Count Dracula Society.

Star Riders, says Coates is a tale of adventure and intrigue, revolution and romance, magic and fantasy. "It's peopled with characters who are bigger than life: beautiful heroines, brave heroes, evil villains, metal robots and monstrous mutants. They live, love and fight in a world of distant stars and planets of the medieval future."

Caroline Munro—alias Stella Star, No 1 space fighter-pilot in Coates' galaxy—has just never had it so good. After numerous small parts in a variety of fantasy films with Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Donald Pleasance and James Bond (At The Earth's Core, The Devil Within Her, Dracula AD 1972, Captain Kronos, Doctor Phibes, Phibes Rises Again, Golden Voyage of Sinbad, and The Spy Who Loved Me), she's now come of international age. The Windsor-born, Brighton-raised model-cum-actress is seen all over Britain as the Lamb's Navy Rum girl on giant hoardings...and she's just been selected to replace Farrah Fawcett Majors as the Norema girl in American tv commercials and posters.

In between posing for global lenses, and various tv interviews at Cannes, she revealed some—but just some—of the new Stella Star adventure. "With Judd as my comical robot sidekick, El, we have a new mission. To help Basim, a faithful officer in a dead king's army, to unravel a mysterious plot of assassination and deceit—and save the life of a beautiful young princess and restore to the throne a young man who doesn't even know he's a prince."

Shooting, she added, begins in November. "The film should be delivered by October, 1980." The others cast thus far include the dwarf actor Torbin and Nancy Kwan as the evil queen of the planet Pearl. With her kung-fu space warriors, she's due to battle Stella Star to the death.

My money's on Stella.

More vital casting, of course, concerns the special effects. Once again, Luigi Cozzi/Lewis Coates has pulled off a coup. As well as his mate, Armando Volcusa, who supplied the effects for *Star Crash* and *The Humenoid*, Coates has signed up veteran Jack Rabin, who's worked on more than 200 movies since beginning his career with the Selznick studios in 1927. After toiling for Fox and Warner Brothers in the '30s and '40s, Jack set up his own outfit in 1947, starting with *I Killed Geronimo* and *The Spirituist*. His other movies include: *Rocketship X-M*, *Unknown World*, *Invasion USA*, *Night of the Hunter* (the

only film Charles Laughton directed), *The 30th Bride of Candy Rock*, *Cat-Women of the Moon*, *Viking Women and the Sea Serpent*, *War of the Satellites*, *The Giant Behemoth*, *Outpost in Space* and Mike Todd's *Around the World in 80 Days*.

Yet again, Roger Corman has lost out. Jack Rubin's more recent work has been for various Corman vehicles: *Death Race 2000*, *The Lady in Red*, *Piranha* and *Avenger*.

As many potential buyers were saying in Cannes: Well, they've got a lot of the right people aboard. Now all they've got to do is go and make the movie.

CALIGARI CONT

Meanwhile, the producer of the original *Star Crash* film, Patrick Wachsberger, is setting up *The Third Caligari*, from an original story by Paul Mayersberg, who scripted *Nic Rog's The Men Who Fell To Earth*. "It's a sort of amalgam of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* and *The Third Men*, set in Chicago, 1928," explained Wachsberger. His partner in the enterprise is Michael Gruskoff, the Hollywood producer behind Doug Trumbull's *Silent Running*, Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein* and Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu*, the Vampire. They certainly keep good company, these founder-members of the Stella Star fan club.

KINSKI RULES, OK?

Nosferatu star Klaus Kinski was looking rather more like his old self again. He's cutting his fingernails instead of his hair these days. With a handsome head of blond hair, Kinski was all over

the place in Cannes. And where he wasn't, his daughter Nastassja was (on the arm of her *Tess* of the d'Urbervilles director, Roman Polanski). Kinski pere headlined the West German entry, *Woyzeck*, a very savage murder tale which he made for Herzog directly after their vampire film—when the actor had about half-an-inch of hair all over his head. Klaus was also in a French film, *Haine*, one of the few movies Maria Schneider has designed to finish in recent years. After something like 165 movies, including sheer garbage along the lines of *Circus of Fear*, *Kali Yug*, *Goddess of Vengeance* (he even appeared in one of Clint Eastwood's spaghetti Westerns), Kinski is now accepted as a star. And he owes it all, or so he says, to Werner Herzog. "I never count the hours when we work together," he said. "With some directors you do that. With Herzog, it's different. Nobody watched the clock on *Nosferatu*. Isabelle Adjani was sometimes working 20 or 21 hours at a stretch. Werner never lets anybody or anything stop his work."

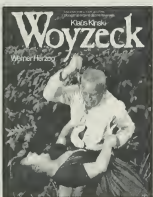
Despite Kinski's amazing performance, *Nosferatu* was, for me, a rotten movie. Herzog is in much better form with *Woyzeck*. Kinski calls it the strongest film the director has yet made. "I can't talk about it too much. I'm still very much shakened by the picture." So was Cannes. Kinski's co-star, Eva Mattes, won the Best Supporting Actress trophy. Didn't she die well?

HOBBIT HABIT

Tolkien, as much London graffiti attests, is definitely hobbit-forming... Producer Saul Zaentz passed through Cannes, tickled pink with his *Lord of the Rings* movie (see review last issue) grossing \$30-million in six months. Almost inevitably, he gave out news of a sequel, plus a future animation number called, quite simply, *The Hobbit*. Rings II will cost \$7-million, \$2-million less than the original, as most of the expensive preparatory work has already been tried, tested and carried out. Director Ralph Bakshi and scripter Peter Beagle will, naturally, make the new film, continuing the adventures of Frodo the Hobbit. It should be ready inside two years. Then, they all start work on *The Hobbit*.

ARGENTO '79

George Romero's *Down of the Deed* was on show, but his partner Dario Argento was missing from Cannes—busy directing his new shocker, *Inferno*, in Rome, for 20th Century-Fox. Dario's brother, Claudio, is producing. "Inferno," says Dario "delves much deeper into terror. A young woman becomes involved in the occult in a crumbling neo-Gothic mansion in New York. Her mounting fears involve her



E•THINGS•TO•C

brother in Rome and friends and neighbours of them both." Argento is shooting the film in English on a 14-week schedule in the De Paolis studios, plus a few U.S. locations. His cast, mostly unknown outside of Italy, includes Eleonora Giorgi, Veronica Lazar, Leigh McCloskey, Daria Nicolodi, Sacha Pfeiff (from *Last Year in Marienbad*), Alida Valli (from *Suspense*) and Irene Miracle (who was Billy Hayes' girlfriend in *Midnight Express*).

LASER SHOW

Someone I unfortunately couldn't locate at Cannes was a certain Harry N. Blum. Pity, that. With his partner, Si Litvinoff, Harry is planning a laser film show, *Laser Lady*, by name. Blum and Litvinoff run something called Laserland in the States and this will be their first Laserland Enterprises movie. Their publicity was of the cheap variety (no bad thing; save all the money

for the movie), but stressed the importance of lasers in our future. On screen and off. Lasers, said the Laserland hype, can create nuclear power, penetrate steel and diamonds, make interplanetary television communications, perform delicate eye operations, measure distances and speed on distant planets, photograph and transmit images. And apparently, make movies. Or at least movie plans.

ALL CHANGE!

Apart from the naked starlets, the big parties, the naked starlets, the official festival entry films, more naked starlets, the sidebar movies, more parties and, yes, still more naked, the most intriguing aspect of any Cannes festival is the transformation of the previous event's films—back again for a second attempt at world sales, last year, only a promotion run of *The Dark* could be screened. This year the film is finished. So is the cosmetic surgery. The ad art is completely changed by screen surgenes Larry Friedricks and David Hilton of the Cinema

Share combine. For last year's monster read this year's "alien terror".

"Okay, so it was a gamble," admits Larry, the Cinema Share president. "But after doing our market research... we decided to shift the emphasis from conventional horror to a sci-fi image, which the plot allowed us to do. We rethought the publicity campaign completely and really put some hours into getting the new art just right. With our experience of selling across the whole range of world markets, we figured we could make the film really work." The pool games at the box-office, of course. The news is good. In its first week's run in Los Angeles, *The Dark* coined a monstrous \$379,582.

STOKER PLUS HESTON

Charlton Heston is the latest star snared by EMI's mammoth \$50-million new production schedule. Big Chuck had the lead in Robert Selt's \$8-million production of *The Awakening of the Seven Stars*. TV man Mike Newell Belgian stage stars Marc-Henri and Alexander directs from Clive Exton's script.

LE HULK

As reported last month in *Starburst* 11, Marvel's very own Incredible Hulk is due to start on French tv as soon as they can figure out what to call him. Meanwhile they have decided to release the pilot as a feature film. No problem with the name here: he's called *L'Encroyable Hulk*, what else?

BEST SEQUEL

Hollywood has finally begun to see the joke about sequels. Peter Benchley, for one, will probably fall all the way to the bank, when the *Jaws* team joins forces with the National Lampoon boys to make: *Jaws 3*, *People 8*. Benchley, of course, is already able to buy a bank or two. As well as the new *Deep* project, he has Michael Caine making his latest book, *The Island*, for the *Jaws* producers, Richard Zanuck and David Brown.

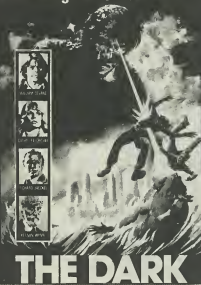
MAD MOVIE

Are you ready for Alfred E. Neuman, movie star? It's happening. *Mad* magazine joins the movies with—what else?—*Mad*, written by Mel Brooks scribe Rudy DeLuca. Having taken the mickney out of movies for years, *Mad* had better be good. No, strike that. *Mad* had better be better than good.

FLASH FLASH

Max Von Sydow is the first casting signed for Dino de Laurentis' *Flash Gordon*. The ex-*Exorcist* will be, you've guessed it, Ming the Merciless.

A Chilling Tale of Alien Terror



OME•THINGS•T



JERRY'S WARS

Never actually thought I'd need to mention Jerry Lewis in this magazine. He turned up in Cannes to host the American tv version of the award ceremonies (directly after the real thing) and to shout about his first completed film in nine years, which is good or bad news depending on how much you value a real

creative comic like Woody Allen. "So what?" I hear you cry. Patience... Jerry is following up his comeback, *Hardly Working*, in the autumn with a sequel called, would you believe, *Hardly Working Attacks Star Wars*. Personally, I'm lost for words, other than to suggest that perhaps Mr Lewis should go back to conducting that orchestra for the 9,876th time and then retire. Fast!

CANNES CASTING

Chris Lee joins the Canadian project *Moon in Scorpio* with Michael Sarrazin, and Eli Wallach...

Battlestar Galactica lead Dirk Benedict joins *Scavenger Hunt*'s 18 stars and twice as many guests, it's been described as *Animal House* meets *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*.

Animal House, in fact, was the most ripped-off movie in the Cannes market this year (well, it's cheaper to copy than *Star Wars*), the copies were mostly about female college campus rumpuses filled with *Charlie's Angels* look-alikes...

Barry Morse rests from st after *The Martian Chronicles* with *Klondyke Fever* and *The Diplomatic Corpse*, while Nicholas Campbell, his screen son (*The Shape of Things To Come*, see *Starburst 10*) attempts to rescue his career with *Yesterday*. Lots of luck, kid.

Lee Majors goes gold-hunting in *Ladyfingers* with Yvette Mimieux, Jack Palance, Nancy Kwan, Eddie Albert and Paul Williams (a real 4th XI cast), and Farrah has joined Roger Moore for *Strictly Business*...

British director J. Lee Thompson says his next is called *Bloodbath*—sounds like *The George Romero Story*...

Peter Collinson directs William Holden in *The Earthling* in Hong Kong...



Looking Good: This is how tv man Charles Fries and Dick Berg are selling their Ray Bradbury mini-series of *The Martian Chronicles* to cinemas. Decent enough cast, better still behind scenes. Andrew Donnelly and Milton Subotsky are the named producers (though Subotsky dropped out of the project prior to completion), Oscar-winner Ted Moore is in charge of photography, and another Oscar-winner, our own John Stears, directs the special effects. Script is by Richard Matheson (who else?) and Michael Anderson directs the whole show. In Britain, BBC-TV have the series, but no start-date as yet. We'll tell you when. Watch this space.

OME•THINGS•T

E•THINGS•TO•C

SUPER PRODUCTION... FOR 1980!



Before Superman could fly — Terry and the Pirates sailed into our lives with Adventures as Vast as the High Seas. As exotic as the Orient and as exciting as the greatest Heroes and Villains in memory!

The World of
TERRY
 and the Pirates
 is now the Movie that brings out the Adventurer in us all.

Still no casting for the vital roles of Pat Ryan and Terry Lee—captain and crew of the swift sloop, *Pilgrim*, plying the South China seas, circa 1933—in Arco-Embassy's \$10-million version of the Milt Caniff strip, *Terry and the Pirates*. It won't be long, though. Shooting begins around Hong Kong in the autumn with Russell Rouse as director. Other roles to be filled include: agricultural expert Dr Jonas Crane, British scientist Dr Brighton, Hong Kong cop Insp Antriae, the darkly sensual gambling lady Countess de Montrachelle, Manchurian warlord Yang Loo Sen, club owner Polo, the White Russians Ivan Rostov and Burma, rickshaw man Willy-Willy, runaway dancer Elaine, French master forger Jacques Broulet... and, of course, *Wo Kwai* the pirate. The current publicity stresses "Before Superman could fly—Terry and the Pirates sailed into our lives with adventures as vast as the High Seas."



Above: A frame from Milton Caniff's *Terry and the Pirates* comics strip from 1936, featuring both Terry and Pat plus their arch-enemy, the Dragon Lady.

STOKER PLUS DISCO

Alice Cooper goes down for the Count in Britain's vampire-musical, *Dracula Fever*. Too late, though. Any vampire send-up should be cancelled now that George Hamilton has such a hit with *Love at First Bite*. He's really cornered the market with his *Dracula* spoof. He did a good selling job at Cannes, too. Dressed up in his full *Dracula* outfit, cape and all, he bared his fangs on the beach... while starlets bared everything else.

STOKER PLUS MAMA

But still they come, the *Dracula* movies. At least Belgium's Valisa Films have a new angle with *Mama Dracula*. The Valisa head, Boris Szulzinger starts directing the film with tri-dimensional hologram effects—in Belgium, West Germany and Yugoslavia in September. Belgian stage stars Marc-Henri and Alexander Weinberg will play Mama D's twin sons. "Everything about *Dracula* has been revealed,"

says Boris. "Until now, nothing is known about his Mama." He's right there!

FOOTNOTE

Cannes has become a festival where the publicists are the real stars. Promotion, as you will have gathered by now, is the name of the Cannes game. My award for the best publicity team, therefore, goes to the ICM Film Marketing combo. Their otherwise brilliant publicity, brochures, and personal co-operation went awry once only in the myriad of films they were handling—everything from Michael Douglas' *Running to Benji's* latest endeavours, from Just Jaeckin's *Girls to Belgium's Mama Dracula*. In their "fast facts about a fresh new film" called *Surfacing*, ICM said actor Joseph Bottoms would soon be "seen as *Flash Gordon* in the Disney feature, *The Black Hole*."

Joseph Bottoms plays a character called Pizer in the Disney sci spectacular. And as far as we know he's not playing *Flash* in the big *Dino de Laurentis* film... Still those things happen. Even at the Cannes film festival.

Maya Merchandising

The following is a list of some of the fantasy film magazines and books available for us. All prices include postage—overseas customers please note that orders will be sent by surface mail. Please make cheques/postal orders payable to MAYA MERCHANDISING and send to us at 52 Roydene Road, Plumstead, London SE18 1QA.

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Full colour approx. 24" x 36" on coated stock. Mailed rolled in protective tube. £2.05 each. Please also quote reference number when ordering.

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Nosferatu. Reproduction of the film poster

1980 CALENDARS

Heroes by Boris: Includes a full colour reproduction of his work for each month plus an additional full colour centre spread. £4.20

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Science Fiction In The Cinema (Saxer) Classic science fiction films in dep h. Illustrated, 6½ x 5½". 240 pages. £2.10

Why not visit our new shop at 54 Bellegrave Road, Welling, Kent, which stocks our full range of fantasy film related material plus science fiction, horror and fantasy novels and American comics.

BOOK WORLD



THE TAR-AIYM KRANG by Alan Dean Foster

It is always a pleasure to read a science fiction novel where the author has taken care to ensure that the alien setting of the story is not given a second thought by the reader.

The story is simply a search for the lost artifact of The Tar-Aiym (the Krang); but quests are never that simple.

The author intends this book to be the first of a series—I only hope he takes as much care with the subsequent titles.

Published by New English Library. 208 pages. 85p.



The Batman of the 1930s as depicted by creator Bob Kane.

(May, 1939). However, it wasn't until six months later that the readers learned the reasons that drove playboy millionaire Bruce Wayne to become The Batman by night in the November 1939 issue of *Detective Comics*. Orphaned by an early version of the seventies mugger, young Bruce Wayne swore to avenge the death of his parents by "warring on all criminals". Of the years following this incident little is revealed but the readers are told that it wasn't until one night, years later, that Wayne conceived his Batman disguise. Relaxing in his study he thought to himself "criminals are a superstitious, cowardly lot so my disguise must be able to strike terror into their hearts! I must be a creature of the



The 1950s introduced Batwoman to the "Batman Family".

night..."

The Early Batman stories were heavily steeped in Gothic horror. The hero stalked through fog-wreathed tales, his dark cape billowing. He was, indeed, a dark avenger of the night. The villains he battled were no less bizarre: Doctor Death, The Monk,

Professor Hugo Strange and The Joker. The Monk was a bona fide member of the Undead, which really set the style and tone for the pre-Robin stories. In the finale of the ten-page tale Batman opens the Monk's coffin to reveal the living corpse and empties a revolver full of silver bullets into the inert form.

For a while after this story The Batman carried a gun at his side though that was soon replaced by a teenaged partner: Robin. Somehow this brought The Batman closer to the real world. His teaming with Robin made him a little more like a human being



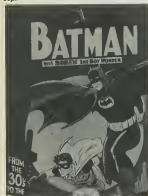
Batman and Superman were a natural team.

and a little less like some sort of phantom.

Towards the mid-50s the Batman stories moved away from the earlier atmospheric style altogether, leaving Batman and Robin to travel to alien planets, combat invaders from outer space and battle giant monsters. It wasn't until the late sixties that Batman returned to the original concept: Robin



Neal Adams' version of The Batman became the definitive portrayal of the character for the seventies.



BATMAN FROM THE 30s TO THE 70s

Very much the comic book answer to the pulp detective *The Shadow*, Bob Kane's Batman debuted in *Detective Comics* 27

played a smaller role in the stories and *The Batman*, the dark avenger of the night, was resurrected.

Batman from the 30s to the 70s covers the entire forty year history of the character. Just about every artist who has ever drawn the strip is represented here. From Bob Kane, Dick Sprang and Jerry Robinson to Irv Novick, Dick Giordano and Neal Adams. And every style of Batman story is included. From the horror tales of the thirties through the crime stories of the forties and the science fiction phase of the fifties and back to the mist-shrouded thirties style in the seventies.

Even if you are not a great fan of the Caped Crusader, and I am not, the book makes an interesting read and is the definitive history of DC Comics second most successful character.

Published by The Hamlyn Publishing Group.
9 3/4 x 7 1/4. 392 pages. £3.95.

"We are in the market for strips most likely to have the most extraordinary appeal, and we do not feel yours fits into that category," the Bell Syndicate told them. "A rather immature piece of work," said United Features. "Pay a little attention to actual drawing... yours seems crude and hurried," recommended Esquire Features.

The two young men, Jerry Siegel (writer) and Joe Shuster (artist), had almost given up hope that their creation would ever see print. They had been working for a comics company DC Comics/Nation Periodicals, producing such strips as *Federal Men*, *Slam Bradley* and *Dr Decult*, when they decided to sell their strip to the company, signing the standard release form and accepting the paltry sum of \$130 for what would become one of the three most famous and most profitable continuing characters in the history of fiction, comic or otherwise.

Their character was an alien from space

existence.

The book is made up primarily of examples of Superman's adventures in each of the four decades, reproduced in both colour and black and white.

Also included is an introduction by long-time Superman editor and acknowledged expert, E. Nelson Bridwell. And at the tail end

BUT EVEN AS THE FUMES FELL THE OTHERS, REPORTER CLARK KENT CHANGES COSTUMES TO BECOME SUPERMAN!

THE GAS IS HARMLESS--SO I CAN CONCENTRATE ON CATCHING LUTHOR! QUIER--THIS DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THE SORT OF CRIME LUTHOR WOULD HAVE PLANNED!



Wayne Boring was the main Superman artist of the 1950s.



By the 1940s Shuster's art had matured a good deal.

called *Superman* and he first appeared in the June, 1938, issue of *Action Comics*.

Within two years, Siegel and Shuster had hired a staff of four artists and were producing 13 comic pages, 6 daily strips and a Sunday page every week. Their reported earnings were in the region of \$75,000 a year. Though they had sold the copyright of *Superman* to DC comics they still produced each and every page of *Superman* artwork.

But as the public's insatiable thirst for more and more *Superman* stories increased, the Siegel/Shuster house could not keep up with the demand. Artists like Jack Burnley, Al Plastino, Wayne Boring and Curt Swan joined the team. In fact, Swan still draws *Superman* today.

The *Superman* trend peaked in the late fifties and early sixties. *Superman* was appearing in several titles: *Action Comics*, *Superman*, *World's Finest*, *Justice League*, *Lois Lane*, *Jimmy Olsen*, and, at an earlier stage in his career in *Superboy* and *Adventure Comics*.

Hamlyn have re-released their mammoth paperback history of the *Man of Steel*, *Superman from the 30s to the 70s*, which chronicles the growth and development of the character through the forty years of his

of the book there is an index to the appearances of *Superman* in comics, films, tv, theatre and radio. However, it is interesting to note that since the book first appeared in 1972, the index has not been updated. Therefore *Superman the Movie* and countless magazine appearances are not listed. It seems a shame that Hamlyn did not bother to ensure that the index was up to date.

That aside, *Superman from the 30s to the 70s* is an excellent sampler of the adventures of the *Man of Steel* and is come highly recommended.

A.M.



SUPERMAN FROM THE 30s TO THE 70s

The story is familiar. In 1933 two youngsters created a cartoon character and spent the next five years trying to sell their concept to a string of disinterested newspaper syndicates.



Joe Shuster's *Superman* as he appeared in the 1930s.



Curt Swan's sophisticated technique carried *Superman* into the seventies.

Published by the Hamlyn Publishing Group.
9 3/4 x 7 1/4. 392 pages. £3.95.

THE THING

FROM ANOTHER WORLD

Feature by Tise Vahimagi

What exactly is a classic science fiction movie? Is it a film that was produced on a super-large budget? A film that headlined a flock of big Hollywood star names? Or a film that skilfully blends together certain qualities so as to result in a whole that outlives and outdistances its contemporaries. The latter description comes closest to what the word "classic" defines when discussing cinema—especially the sf genre.

One such film, from the sf-movie heyday of the fifties, is *The Thing*. Made by Winchester Pictures Corporation and released by RKO-Radio in April 1951, the distributors later decided to add the subtitle *From Another World* to ensure that the publicity hailed the film as a *bona fide*

Arctic wasteland and the solitary confinement of the base-camp. *The Thing*, in the book, has the ability to change its shape and form, and assume the identity of its victims.

Essentially, *The Thing* is the central factor in Campbell Jr's story, whereas in Howard Hawks' movie—and Charles Lederer's screenplay—the alien is relegated to co-starring status; the film mainly focuses on the internal conflict between the US Air Force men and the scientists. This, consequently, adds a different dimension to the film—an un-precedented extra quality—which makes all the characters more human and realistic. Further realism is added by Hawks' use of over-lapping dialogue; star Kenneth Tobey, in an interview for *Photon* magazine, has commented: "Well, I'm going to take a little bit of credit for over-lapping dialogue. I come from Broadway and on Broadway you do an awful lot of over-lapping to keep the pace. Some actors have difficulty with over-lapping while trying to maintain all of the things the director wants. So that was kind of my idea. I just do it naturally."

The film was budgeted at 1,300,000 dollars—400,000 of which was spent developing *The Thing* itself. The then-unknown actor James Arness (who later went on to tv fame as Matt Dillon in *Guns, Smoke, and more recently in How the West Was Won*) played the title role, for which makeup man Lee Greenway took over two months to create the right image

that producer Hawks wanted. Altogether, Greenway made eighteen separate sculptures before the producer gave it his final seal of approval.

From its recording instruments, a scientific expedition at the North Pole learns that some unknown aircraft has landed nearby. A crew of American Air Force men, headed by Captain Pat Hendry (played by Kenneth Tobey), fly the scientists out to the spot and discover a large, saucer-shaped object frozen deeply into the snow. When they attempt to get the saucer out, by melting the ice with thermite bombs, they only succeed in destroying it; however, they manage to rescue the saucer's occupant, an eight-foot tall, human-like being, which is frozen solid in a block of ice.

"Who Goes There?"

science fiction thriller. On close inspection, one can see the additional "From Another World" tag burned into the negative below the original title.

It all began with the August, 1938, issue of *Astounding Science Fiction*, in which John W. Campbell Jr's story "Who Goes There?" was published. Campbell penned the tale for the Street & Smith pulp-magazine house under the pseudonym of "Don A. Stuart", derived from Dona Stuart, his wife's maiden name.

Both the story and the film version maintain the basic, powerful tension of the

The Thing Escapes

The party return to the base-camp where the leader of the scientists, Dr Carrington (Robert Cornthwaite), quarrels with Hendry over thawing the alien out. Hendry insists on waiting for orders from his superior, while Carrington is purely concerned with the immediacy of scientific investigation.

However, the ice is accidentally allowed to melt and *The Thing* escapes. During its flight *The Thing's* arm is torn off in a fight with some sledge dogs, and later the scientists identify it as being composed of vegetable matter; in fact, indestructible, living on human blood and with super-

human mental and physical ability ("An intellectual carrot. The mind boggles!"). Thing, but further friction arises between Carrington, who wants to study and communicate with it—despite the violent deaths of two of his colleagues; and Hendry, who believes that it must be destroyed to save the rest of them.

Finally, following various skirmishes with The Thing, Hendry's Crew Chief (Dewey Martin) suggests electrocution. During the final confrontation between man and alien, Carrington is injured in a last desperate attempt to pacify The Thing—which disintegrates under a powerful electric charge.

Watch the Skies

The closing scene of the film, before fade-out, shows newspaperman Scotty (Douglas Spencer) broadcasting his bulletin to the anxious world: "North Pole, November 15—Ned Scott reporting. Flash. The world's greatest battle was fought and won today by the human race. Here at the top of the world, a handful of American soldiers and civilians wiped out the first invasion from another planet. This first skirmish for the possession of the earth by the creatures from space was won by the daring leadership of Captain Patrick Hendry. Noah once saved the world with an ark of wood. Captain Hendry performed a similar service for our planet with an arc of electricity. But, ladies and gentlemen of the globe—there is an enemy hovering over our heads—an enemy with an armada of flying saucers, and an army of super-human and fantastic warriors. Every citizen of the world must become a sentinel-watching the skies. Keep looking for the next flying saucer—watch the skies, watch everything over your head—throw a ring of watch towers around the earth—Keep looking—looking—looking..."

Man from Mars

With the Atom Bomb, UFOs and the general flying saucer hysteria very much in the minds of Americans, the overwhelming interest in science fiction movies became evident through the popularity of *Destination Moon* (1950) and *The Thing*.

Both films featured a cast of virtual unknowns—proving that it was the story and the science fiction angle that the audience came to enjoy and not the "stars." This is still very much the case today; the central characters in the phenomenally successful *Star Wars* were played by unknowns: Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher and Harrison Ford.

So, the theme was the thing—or, in this case, *The Thing from Another World*.

Destination Moon boasted the visual effects of the first rocketship flight and, later, scenes played out on the "Moon's surface," while *The Thing* scored by producing an alien invader—a "man from

Nikki Nicholson (Margaret Sheridan) recoils in fear and Capt Patrick Hendry (Kurt Russell) looks suitably disgusted at some Thing out of camera-range. *The Thing from Another World* (1952).



Mars" landing on Earth with the ability to conquer the entire world. Later, other elements were introduced into the genre and, in late 1951, politics, social issues and sf were woven together to make *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

The Thing doesn't succeed on the qualities of containing *astounding* science fiction concepts or even a strong appeal to sf literature buffs. The film contains, in fact, very little by way of science fiction. What actually makes *The Thing* one of the strangest sf movies of all is that it really isn't a science fiction movie at all. This may sound like something of a paradox, but when you consider the structural components involved in making up the film there are really more horror elements in the film than anything else. There is only one player on the chessboard who has any connection with science fiction—the "man from Mars." Of course, there is the reference to his craft—the flying saucer—

but as we never really get to see it, even before our heroes incinerate it with thermite bombs, it is not a significant part of the film's theme, and merely helps get the story underway.

Alien Horror

The Thing from Another World is—with the greatest of respect for the film—an out-and-out *Horror* film with science fiction trappings.

This established, *The Thing* seems to be something of an ancestor of the new 20th Century-Fox sf shocker Allen. Many of the trappings appear to be very similar, only the locations have been changed. Nothing, it seems, is new or original.

Basically, the science fiction element is introduced through the presentation of the alien—or monster, if you like. *The Thing* itself resembles a Frankenstein Monster—

like humanoid; it is discovered to be, literally, a walking vegetable which can reproduce itself simply by dropping seeds as it moves; and it lives on a diet of blood. A vampire, in fact. If you accept the premise of the film, you accept the alien monster, and if you're a fantasy fan you'll be happy with the film anyway. There is, however, one curious side-note that is never explained: if the alien lives on blood, where did it dine on in its home planet where, presumably, it was surrounded by only its fellow-vegetables?

Approaching Terror

The Arctic base-camp, with its sinister maze of small rooms and corridors, appears to be a variation on the "old dark house" setting. A very effective one at that. All the stock Horror film effects are employed; one of the exciting confrontations with the alien, in a barrack-room, is played out in uneasy darkness, illuminated only when kerosene is thrown and the alien is set ablaze. Even then the effect is eerie. It was intended by producer Hawks to keep the alien as much of a shadowy figure as possible, to be seen either in long-shot or in silhouette. Scenes in close-up were shot but were later edited out. One particularly dramatic scene, showing the alien in medium-shot, occurs when

Hendry, Newspaperman Scotty and some of the crew members search the rooms for The Thing; they open a few doors—all poised for action—but find nothing; then Hendry, less dramatically, pulls open a door and suddenly finds himself face to face with the startling Thing! The Crew Chief's machine-gun blazes point-blank into the alien... the alien lashes out, almost taking the door-frame with it, before Hendry manages to slam the door shut. This scene happens so fast that the audience hardly get a glimpse of The Thing. The moment is one of perfect shock; since we didn't expect anything to be there—especially after the previous sequence of rooms had held nothing to worry about. The audience's feelings can probably be summed up in an exchange between Hendry and the newspaperman: "Did you get your picture, Scotty?"

"No. You were in the way. And the door wasn't open long enough."

"Do you want me to open it again?"

"NO!"

As with most good science fantasy films, touches of wry humour mingle with the more dramatic dialogue. Approaching the final confrontation with The Thing, one of the Air Force men suggests, "What if he can read our minds?" Another replies, "He's gonna be real mad when he gets to me!" This exchange, during a suspenseful

moment, helps lighten the mood slightly but still manages to maintain the sense of approaching terror.

Sudden Attack

The camerawork, expertly handled by cinematographer Russell Harlan, is a prime ingredient in suggesting approaching horrors; the camera prowls around the dimly-lit corridors, at low-angle, and always manages to catch crowded little rooms or huddled groups. Doors and doorways are often seen in the frame, even when nobody is using them, to suggest the possibility of sudden attack from The Thing; a vulnerable point in an environment of agreeable claustrophobia.

The Crew Chief's geiger counter plays an important part in building suspense; almost a substitute for the usual swelling music, the geiger clicks away the warning that The Thing is approaching, getting nearer and nearer. The build-up to the first battle with the alien begins this way. The geiger starts clicking; somebody says, "It's getting stronger"; the clicking gets rapid; "Eight point six. And going up."; the needle finally goes off the dial...

The reviewer for the BFI's Monthly Film Bulletin commented at the time of the film's release: "Science fiction might well approximate more closely to the methods of

Below. In one of the film's lighter moments, Hendry (Ken Tobey) and Nikki (Margaret Sheridan) engage in some horseplay.



the horror film, to which category *The Thing* to some extent belongs. The deliberate playing down of the extraordinary and its explaining away in scientific jargon—once the fantastic premise has been accepted—weakens the imaginative impact."

Nearly every member of the cast and technical crew on the production of *The Thing From Another World* accord their talents superbly.

Veteran Hollywood producer-director Howard Hawks has directed a great many unique and exciting films, underlined by his skilful presentation of male-dominated professional camaraderie (the Air Force men in *The Thing*) and outwardly tough but essentially all-woman heroines (such as Nikki, played by Margaret Sheridan, in *The Thing*).

Who directed The Thing?

It has been said that Hawks—not Christian Nyby—actually directed *The Thing*. However, the most accurate "theory" concerning actual authorship of the film is that Nyby (who had been an accomplished Hollywood film editor, and had previously worked on Hawks' sprawling Western, *Red River*) required a director credit for the Guild and Hawks assigned him

The Thing. Nyby later directed for tv, holding the megaphone on various episodes of *Twilight Zone*, *I Spy*, *Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Rockford Files*.

Many Scenes Cut

Actor Kenneth Tobey went on to appear in various films during the 1950s and '60s, but only appeared in three other fantasy films: *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953), *It Came from Beneath the Sea* (1955) and *The Vampire* (1957). Generally associated with tough-guy roles, Tobey's portrayal of the determined Air Force Captain is made all the more realistic by his underplaying the part; he has difficulty in making decisions, and his Crew Chief ends up making most of the major decisions. Kenneth Tobey remains one of the best, if not the most likeable, 1950 sf movie heroes.

Both Douglas Spencer, as Scotty (called Skeely in the original script), and Dewey Martin, as Bob the Crew Chief, are highly likeable and interesting characters. Although their characters are mainly relegated to the sidelines the realism with which they project their parts remains in the memory long after the film is over. Spencer later appeared in a somewhat minor but memorable role as the Monitor in Universal's *This Island Earth*.

Robert Cornthwaite's Dr Carrington has more feeling and subtlety than most viewers would credit to him. His aims are a justified, in saving the alien, as Hendry's are in destroying it. But, to most, the character remains an out-and-out villain. In the original draft of the screenplay the character is decapitated by *The Thing* during the climactic show-down.

The final footage of *The Thing*, when all filming was complete, ran for almost double its present length. Many scenes were later cut out in order to add a more mysterious mood to the events. A lot of the action which is only talked about in the film was actually shot—such as the killing of the two scientists in the greenhouse, and the destruction of the power generator.

The Thing from Another World, in introducing the first outer space visitor/intruder, started an entire genre—it marked the coming of a huge tidal wave of sf movies for the decade that followed. The film also established the original set of military heroes and scientific dreamers, both involved in engaging the alien force and, eventually, saving the world from it.

The Thing vs Alien

The film remains unique (but not for long, with the imminent release of *Alien*) in that it represents a superb fusion of gothic horror and science fantasy. Probably the most simple yet remarkable aspect of *The Thing* is that today's audiences—remember, the film was made some 28 years ago—view and enjoy the picture with the same horror, humour, anxiety and pleasure that the early fifties audiences experienced. In short, *The Thing* remains a true classic of sf cinema.



Dr Arthur Carrington (Robert Cornthwaite), Nikki (Margaret Sheridan), Hendry (Ken Tobey) and Dr Redding (George Fennema) as they get to the bottom of the strange goings on in their Arctic basecamp.

The Thing From Another World (1951)

Kenneth Tobey (Captain Patrick Hendry), Margaret Sheridan (Nikki Nicholson), Robert Cornthwaite (Dr Arthur Carrington), Douglas Spencer (Ned "Scotty" Scott), James Young (Lt Eddie Dykes), Dewey Martin (Crew Chief Bob), Robert Nichols (Lt Ken Ericson), William Self (Corporal Bunker), Edward Prange (Dr Stern), Sally Crichton (Mrs Chapman), John Dickers (Dr Chapman), Paul Frees (Dr Vorhees), George Fennema (Dr Redding), David McMillan (General Roberts), Norbert Schiller (Dr Laurence), James Arness (The Thing).

Directed by Christian Nyby. Screenplay by Charles Lederer based on the story "What Goes There?" by John W. Campbell Jr. Photographed by Russell Harlan. Art direction: Albert S. D'Agostino and John L. Hughes. Music by Dimitri Tiomkin. Special effects by Donald Stewart. Special photographic effects by Linwood Dunn. Edited by Roland Gross. Makeup by Lee Greenway. Associate Producer Edward Lasker. Produced by Howard Hawks. RKO Radio/Winchester Pictures Corporation. Time: 87 mins.

THE CHINA SYNDROME

Review by John Brosnan

Last year when this film was being made it was science fiction but by the time it was released it had become science fact. The events in *The China Syndrome*, dealing with a malfunction in a nuclear power station that almost resulted in the State of California being made uninhabitable, were duplicated in real-life almost step-by-step when an emergency occurred earlier this year at the Harrisburg reactor in Pennsylvania.

This rather disturbing example of life imitating art certainly adds an extra resonance to the movie but doesn't entirely explain why *The China Syndrome* has such enormous impact. The main reason is that it's a beautifully made thriller that never puts a foot wrong and maintains its pace and skilful build-up of suspense to the very end. This is Hollywood expertise at its finest and though the makers may be fully committed to their message—that nuclear reactors can never be perfectly safe until human beings become perfectly reliable—they don't allow the message to get in the way of the entertainment. And yet, because as entertainment its so successful the message ends up being delivered much more forcefully and effectively than it would have been in a film that was more overt in its preaching. (One can just imagine what a film maker like Jean Luc Godard would do with the same theme—the result would be praised by *Sight and Sound* magazine and seen by nobody.)

It also works on other levels—for one thing it provides an illuminating look at the inside workings of television (particularly American tv) and shows how the medium can manipulate the news by the very way it's presented. Jane Fonda plays Kimberly Wells, a sort of Californian equivalent to Anna Ford whose job is to provide the lighter moments in an already superficial "snappy" news program with items on singing telegrams and whale migration but who yearns to become an investigative reporter. She gets her opportunity when, during the filming of an uncontroversial filler item on the Ventana nuclear power plant, she and her radical cameraman (*Mike Douglas*) witness, and secretly film, an emergency in the reactor control room. But when they subsequently try to have their footage shown on tv they find that the powerful financial interests who own the plant have blocked the potentially embarrassing film.

There is a token enquiry about the incident which is basically just a cover-up but Kimberly succeeds in persuading the chief technician at the plant, Jack Godell (*Jack Lemmon*) to publicly reveal that there



Above: TV reporter Kimberly Wells (Jane Fonda) snatches a few minutes alone with nuclear power technician, Jack Godell (Jack Lemmon), to assess his sanity before he broadcasts his reasons for taking over the power plant at gunpoint. Right: Kimberly Wells and her cameraman, Richard Adams (Michael Douglas), plan their next camera set-up for their report on the workings of a nuclear power station.



is a fundamental structural flaw in the reactor which will eventually lead to a major disaster. However Godell is prevented from giving his evidence and is finally forced to barricade himself in the control room and threaten to cause irreversible damage to the reactor unless they allow him to make his statement on tv. Kimberly's tv crew are allowed into the plant to film Godell but, significantly, his inability to make use of the tv medium effectively causes him to sound like an incoherent, hysterical fool and this gives the corrupt nuclear officials time to take steps to foil his plan. But the steps they take backfire in the most terrifying way...

The cast is excellent. Jane Fonda, who seems to get better as she gets older, is superb as the female newscaster fighting to break out of the stereotype role she's been cast in by her condescending male employers; Jack Lemmon gives a less mannered

performance than usual as the conscience-stricken atom plant employee; Michael Douglas (who also produced the film) is fine as the rebellious cameraman and they are backed up by a solid group of supporting players (Peter Donat is particularly good as Jacovich, the tv station owner).

But the film's main asset is the script, by Mike Gray, T. S. Cook and James Bridges, and the impeccable direction by James Bridges. The latter's eye for detail and his subtle extra touches add realism to both the characters and the events. For example, there's a marvellous little moment in a scene in a bar where Jack Lemmon casually propositions Fonda and is gently turned down—it's handled with such smooth subtlety you might not even notice what's going on (a less accomplished director might have turned the incident into an embarrassing sequence).



Another thing you may not notice is the extensive use of matte paintings and miniatures to create the exteriors and some of the interiors of the "Ventana Power Plant" which, as such, doesn't exist. These effects are the work of Matthew Yurich, James F. Likes and Richard Edlund.

On every level *The China Syndrome* is film making at its best—it's certainly the best film I've seen so far this year.

The China Syndrome (1979)

Jane Fonda (as Kimberly Wells), Jack Lemmon (Jack Godell), Michael Douglas (Richard Adams), Daniel Valdez (Hector Salas), James Hampton (Bill Gibson), Peter Donat (Don Jacovich).

Directed by James Bridges. Screenplay by Mike Gray, T. S. Cook and James Bridges. Director of Photography James Crabe. Production Design by George Jenkins. Edited by David Rawlins. Music by Stephen Bishop. Special Effects by Matthew Yurich, James F. Likes and Richard Edlund. Associate Producer James Nelson. Executive Producer Bruch Gilbert. Produced by Michael Douglas. Released by Columbia-EMI-Warner Distributors.

Time: 122 mins

Cert: A



Above: When the authorities try to prevent Godell (Jack Lemmon) from warning tv audiences of the danger at the Ventana Nuclear Power Plant their plan backfires and Godell is shot by security men. Left: Jane Fonda as the would-be crusading tv reporter, Kimberly Wells.

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STARBURST INDEX VOLUME 1

Each issue contains *Things to Come*, Starburst's regular news column by Tony Crawley. Issues 3-9, 11, 12 contain Starburst Letters. Issues 3-13 contained *Book World*. Issues 4, 9 and 10 contained *Record World*.



Starburst 1

The Winters of *Star Trek* plus episode index, The Story of *Star Wars*, Pass the Book—a new sf story by Harry Harrison, The Making of *Star Wars*, *Litterbug* comic strip by Dave Gibbons, *Spaceburst* comic strip by Brian Lewis, Jeff Hawke comic strip *Here by Tygers*.

Starburst 2

Threeipo Unmasked (Anthony C3PD interview), *Spiderman* movie review, Ray Bradbury on *Close Encounters*, *Space Cruiser* review, The Prisoner explained, Ralph Bakshi's *Wizards* review, The Visitor comic strip by Jim Starlin, Jeff Hawke in *Here Be Tygers*, Giant *Space Cruiser* poster.

Starburst 3

Close Encounters of the Third Kind review, Harrison Ford interview, Quark the tv series, *Star Trek The Motion Picture* Update, *Superman The Movie* news, History of Science Fiction in the Cinema, The Death of *Logan's Run*, The Making of *Close Encounters*, Giant *Superman* poster.

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The Hulk on television, Tolkien on Film, Screenwriter Stirling Silliphant interview, War of the Worlds, SF Movies in Marvel Comics, John Boorman on *Merlin*, *Star Trek* news, full colour comic strip A Good Woman, Giant War of the Worlds poster.

Starburst 5

The Making of *Superman the Movie*, *Starburst* review, Metal Messiah review, Lucas and Spielberg—Beyond *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters*, Dark Star review, Dark Star producer John Carpenter interview, Cannes Film Festival 1978 report, Douglas Trumbull interview, *Battlestar Galactica*—full colour pictorial feature, Dark Star poster.

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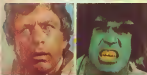
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